TALES FROM A DUGOUT

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

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TALES
FROM A DUGOUT

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BY

ARTHUR GUY EMPEY

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I DEDICATE THIS BOOK

TO THE

"ARMY OF THE PEOPLE WHO STAY AT HOME":

the overaged, the women, the physically unfit and the children. These are the ones to be pitied, the ones who suffer most, because their hearts are on the battlefields of France, although their bodies must stay at home.

FOREWORD

Picture a dugout in one of the front line trenches of France, damp and evil smelling, hardly deep enough to protect the inmates from a three-inch shell-burst. This hole in the ground will comfortably house four soldiers. Put seven of them with full equipment and a machine gun in it, and what results? I dare say in civilian life there would be only one outcome—TROUBLE. Well, in the army on the Western Front, this situation spells GOOD FELLOWSHIP.

If it were only possible for a giant dictograph to be invented, the transmitter being placed in any dugout of the American Army in France, while at the receiver, across the Atlantic, the American Public "listened in," many a heartache would disappear, worry for the "boys at the front" would more or less vanish

in mist. If the mothers, fathers, wives, sweethearts, sisters and friends, could only hear these conversations, their hearts would be filled with joy and pride for the fighting men of America. Of course, at times, few and far between, they would be slightly shocked, as most eavesdroppers are, but on the whole, they would listen to wonderful sentiment, clean and wholesome Americanism.

It has been my misfortune not to have occupied an American dugout as yet, but I have crowded into one with the Britisher, with good old Tommy Atkins. We are of the same family, the same blood runs through our veins, so Tommy's ideas and conversations are identical with those of our brave American boys. Therefore, I hope that in a way these Tales from a Dugout will help fill the void of the absent dictograph.

It is only a matter of time before our boys and our Allies, God bless them all, will victoriously return to "Blighty," and be received in the arms of their waiting dear ones.

PREAMBLE

There were seven of them composing the crew of Gun No. 2, of the ——th Brigade Machine Gun Company. Their gun was the Vickers, light, .303, watercooled.

They were nicknamed as follows:

Curly, a Scotchman. Dubbed Curly on account of a cute little Della Fox curl. He gave more attention to this curl than to his rifle. Many girls wrote to him, and he wrote to many girls.

Happy, a Londoner. He earned his title from his happy disposition. He helped Curly with his correspondence.

Hungry. His nickname needs no explanation. He was. Once Mr. Hoover dined with him, hence his food conservation idea. Hungry hailed from London.

Ikey. He was. Came from the East Side,

London. Brave as a lion, and to our discomfort, musically inclined.

Dick. Irish, from Dublin. Always ready. Greatly admired the Kaiser because he started such a glorious scrap.

Sailor Bill. A Welshman. He had had a "cruise" in the Navy, and wanted everybody to know it. They did. He was detailed with the gun's crew to carry "ammo" (ammunition).

Yank. Got his handle because he was American. He hailed from the "Big Town" behind the Statue of Liberty, and was proud of it, too. Committed a "technical error" and got mixed up in the Great Fight.

They were soldiers of the King, and their further personal history does not matter. It will suffice to say that they were fighting in the British Army for Justice, Democracy and Liberty.

Scene of action: "Somewhere in France."
Time: A few months after the sinking of the *Lusitania.*

After "stand down" had been passed along the fire trench, they would repair to their two-by-four dugout, and it was their custom to while away the time by taking turns at story-telling. Some of these were personal experiences, while others were told to them by their mates, the majority of whom, by this time, have either "gone West," or reached that heaven of the British soldier—"Blighty."

"THROUGH THE BIG GUNS' THUNDER"

Over the top and give them hell,
  Up the ladders and through the wire.
Out in front, go across with a yell,
  With bullets cracking from rapid fire.

Then the death song of a ricochet,
  A curse or moan as your pal goes under,
You cannot stop, you must not stay—
  It 's on—on—thro' the big guns' thunder.

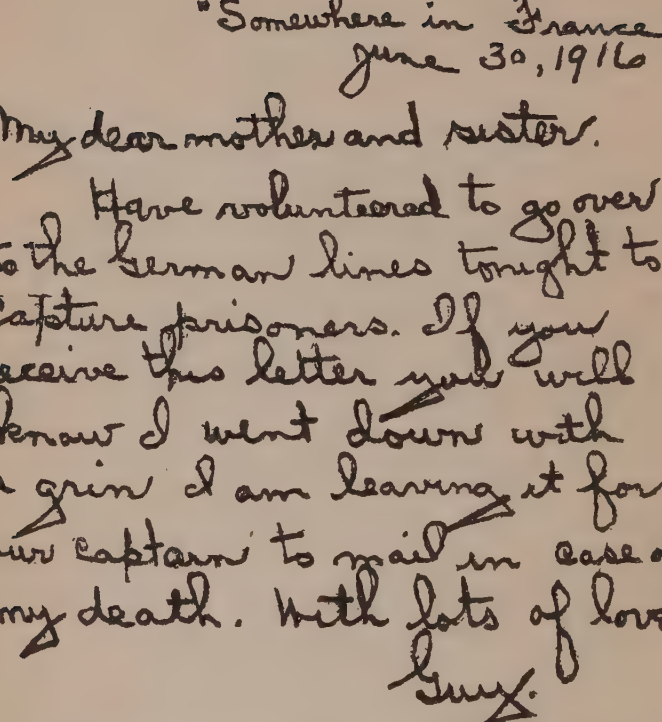
It hurts to see him torn apart,
  For you 've shared his grub on "sentry go,"
And listened to tales of his sweetheart,
  In dugouts by the candles' glow.

But war is war, the trench must be taken,
  Whether your life's blood pays the cost.
If the wounded die in holes, forsaken,
  It 's part of the game; they played, and—lost.

If you get hit and the blood runs out,
  Don't cry and whimper from the ground,
But FACE that trench, don't turn about,
  Cheer, tho' it 's from the Great Beyond!

When you reach their trench, then use the steel,
  Sink it deep into Fritz's hide,
Send it home, so that he will feel,
  How the women and children of Belgium died.

A. G. E.


"Somewhere in France"
June 30, 1916

My dear mother and sister.

Have volunteered to go over to the German lines tonight to capture prisoners. If you receive this letter you will know I went down with a grin I am leaving it for our captain to mail in case of my death. With lots of love.

Guy.

Facsimile of letter written by the Author, when he went over the top for the first time.

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TALES
FROM A DUGOUT

TALES FROM A DUGOUT

IT was a cold and rainy afternoon. The gun's crew were huddled together in their dugout in the front line trench, about three hundred yards from the German lines.

If you should ask a Tommy Atkins "What is a dugout?" he would look at you in astonishment, and pitying you for your apparent lack of education, would answer, "What 's a dugout? Why a dugout is a blinkin'—well, a dugout 's a dugout."

This particular dugout was a hole in the ground. It was used to shelter the men in the trenches from shell fire. They also slept in it, or tried to. From their point of view, its main use was to drain the trenches of muddy water, and give them rheumatism. It also

made a good hotel for rats. These guests looked upon them as intruders, and complained that they overcrowded the place. Occasionally the crew gave in to the rats, and took a turn in the trench to rest themselves.

The dugout was about eight feet deep, or, at least there were eight wooden steps leading down to it. The ceiling and walls were braced by heavy, square-cut timbers. Over the timbers, in the ceiling, sheets of corrugated iron were spread to keep the wet earth from falling. The entrance was heavily sandbagged and very narrow, there being only room for one person to leave or enter at a time. The ceiling was five feet high, and the floor space was eight feet by six. Through the ceiling a six-inch square air-shaft was cut. They used to take turns sleeping under this in wet weather.

The timbers bracing the walls were driven full of nails to hang equipment on. After ammunition, belt-filling machine, rations, equipment, rifles, machine-gun, etc., had been

stowed away, there was not much space for seven men to live in, not forgetting the rats.

It was very dark in the dugout, and as they were only issued a candle and a half every twenty-four hours, they had to economize on light. Woe betide the last man out who left the candle burning!

In this hotel of theirs, they used to sit around the lonely candle, and, through a thick haze of tobacco smoke, recounted different experiences at various points of the line where they had been, or spin yarns about home. At other times they 'd sit for an hour or more without saying a word, listening to a German over in the enemy's front trench playing a cornet. My, how that Boche could play! Just to make them hate the war, he 'd play "Sewanee River," "Home, Sweet Home," or "Over the Waves." During his recital, the trenches were strangely quiet. Never a shot from either side.

Sometimes, when he had finished, Ikey would go into the trench and play on his harmonica.

As soon as the crew saw that harmonica come out, it was a case of "Duck down low," for the Germans would be sure, when the first strains reached them, to send over "Five rounds rapid." That harmonica was hated by both sides. More than once Sailor Bill chucked one over the top, but Ikey would sit down and write a letter, and in about ten days' time would receive through the post a little oblong package, and then the crew knew that they were in for some more "Five rounds rapid." They did n't blame the Germans.

Still, that harmonica had its uses. Often they would get downhearted and fed up with the war, and "grouse" at everything in general. Then Ikey would reach in his pocket, and out would come that instrument of torture. The rest then realized there were worse things than war, and cheered up accordingly.

On this particular rainy afternoon the gun's crew were in a talkative mood. Perhaps it was due to the fact that Curly had made his "Tommy's cooker" do what it was supposed

to do—make water boil in an hour and a half. A "Tommy's cooker" is a spirit stove, which is very widely advertised as a suitable gift to the men in the trenches. Many are sent out, and many are thrown away.

Anyway, the "cooker" lived up to its reputation for once, though a little behind its advertised schedule in making water boil. Curly passed around the result of his efforts in the form of an ammunition tin half full of fairly good tea. Each took a good swig, lighted a Woodbine cigarette,—they had "come up" with the rations the night before—and settled back against the damp earthen walls of the dugout to listen.

It was Dick's turn for a story. He cleared his throat two or three times and said—nothing. A chorus of "Come on, let 's have it," from the rest of the crew did not help matters. In desperation Dick said, "I guess you fellows 'll have to excuse me this time, I can't seem to remember a thing."

"Yank" helped him out with, "Say, Dick,

tell us about Jim, the platoon mascot you used to have."

"Sailor Bill or Hungry could tell it better. Even Ikey knows it," replied Dick.

But after much coaxing from Happy, Curly and Yank, Dick started in.

JIM—SOLDIER OF THE KING

As Told by Dick

JIM—SOLDIER OF THE KING

OUR company had just arrived at rest billets, after a hard eighteen kilo march from the front line sector.

"The stable we had to sleep in was an old, ramshackle affair, absolutely over-run with rats. Great, big, black fellows, who used to chew up our leather equipment, eat our rations, and run over our bodies at night. German gas had no effect on these rodents; in fact, they seemed to thrive on it.

"The floor space would comfortably accommodate about twenty men lying down, but when thirty-three, including equipment, were crowded into it, it was nearly unbearable.

"The roof and walls were full of shell-holes. When it rained, a constant drip, drip, drip was in order. We were so crowded that if a fellow was unlucky enough (and nearly all of

us in this instance were unlucky) to sleep under a hole, he had to grin and bear it. It was like sleeping beneath a shower bath.

"At one end of the billet, with a ladder leading up to it, was a sort of grain bin, with a door in it. This place was the headquarters of our guests, the rats. Many a stormy cabinet meeting was held there by them. Many a boot was thrown at it during the night to let them know that Tommy Atkins objected to the matter under discussion. Sometimes one of these missiles would ricochet and land on the upturned countenance of a snoring Tommy, and for about half an hour even the rats would pause in admiration of his flow of language.

"On the night in question we flopped down in our wet clothes and were soon asleep. As was usual, our gun's crew were together.

"The last time we had rested in this particular village, it was inhabited by civilians. Now it was deserted. An order had been issued two days previous to our return that all civilians should move farther behind the line.

"I had been asleep about two hours when I was awakened by Sailor Bill shaking me by the shoulder. He was trembling like a leaf, and whispered to me:

"'Wake up, Dick, this ship 's 'aunted. There 's some one aloft who 's been moanin' for the last hour. Sounds like the wind in the riggin'. I ain't scared of 'umans or Germans, but when it comes to messin' in with spirits it 's time for me to go below. Lend your ear an' cast your deadlights on that grain locker, and listen.'

"I listened sleepily for a minute or so, but could hear nothing. Coming to the conclusion that Sailor Bill was dreaming things, I was again soon asleep.

"Perhaps fifteen minutes had elapsed when I was rudely awakened.

"'Dick, for God's sake, come aboard and listen!'

"I listened, and sure enough, right out of that grain bin overhead came a moaning and whimpering, and then a scratching against the

door. My hair stood on end. Blended with the drip, drip of the rain, and the occasional scurrying of a rat overhead, that noise had a supernatural sound. I was really frightened; perhaps my nerves were a trifle unstrung from our recent tour in the trenches.

"I awakened Ikey, while Sailor Bill roused Hungry. Hungry's first words were, 'What 's the matter, breakfast ready?'

"In as few words as possible, we told them what had happened. I lighted a candle and their faces appeared as white as chalk. Just then the whimpering started again, and we were frozen with terror. The tension was relieved by Ikey's voice:

" 'H'I admit h'I 'm afraid of ghosts, but that sounds like a dog to me. Who 's goin' up the ladder to investigate?'

"No one volunteered.

"I had an old deck of cards in my pocket. Taking them out, I suggested cutting, the low man to go up the ladder. They agreed. I was the last to cut. I got the ace of clubs.

Sailor Bill was stuck with the five of diamonds. Upon this, he insisted that it should be the best two out of three cuts, but we overruled him, and he was unanimously elected for the job.

"With a 'So long, mates, I 'm goin' aloft,' he started toward the ladder, with the candle in his hand, stumbling over the sleeping forms of many. Sundry grunts, moans, and curses followed in his wake.

"As soon as he started to ascend the ladder, a 'tap-tap-tap' could be heard from the grain bin. We waited in fear and trembling the result of his mission. Hungry was encouraging him with, 'Cheero, mate, the worst is yet to come.'

"After many pauses, Sailor Bill reached the top of the ladder and opened the door. We listened with bated breath. Then he shouted:

" 'Blast my deadlights, if it hain't a poor dog! Come h'longside, myte, you 're h'on a lee shore, and in a sorry plight.'

"Oh, what a relief those words were to us.

"With the candle in one hand and a dark object under his arm, Sailor Bill returned and deposited in our midst the sorriest-looking specimen of a cur dog you ever set eyes on. It was so weak it could n't stand. But that look in its eyes—just gratitude, plain gratitude. Its stump of a tail was pounding against my mess tin, and sounded just like a message in the Morse code. Ikey swore that it was sending S. O. S.

"We were like a lot of school children, every one wanting to help, and making suggestions at the same time. Hungry suggested giving it something to eat, while Ikey wanted to play on his infernal jew's harp, claiming it was a musical dog. Hungry's suggestion met our approval, and there was a general scramble for haversacks. All we could muster was some hard bread and a big piece of cheese.

"His nibs would n't eat bread, and also refused the cheese, but not before sniffing at it for a couple of minutes. I was going to throw the cheese away, but Hungry said he would

take it. I gave it to him. I suppose he ate it.

"We were in an awful stew. It was evident that the dog was starving and in a very weak condition. Its coat was lacerated all over, probably from the bites of rats. That stump of a tail kept sending S. O. S. against my mess tin. Every tap went straight to our hearts. We would get something to eat for that mutt if we were shot for it.

"Sailor Bill volunteered to burglarize the quartermaster's stores for a tin of unsweetened condensed milk, and left on his perilous venture. He was gone about twenty minutes. During his absence, with the help of a bandage and a capsule of iodine, we cleansed the wounds made by the rats. I have bandaged many a wounded Tommy, but never received the amount of thanks that that dog gave with its eyes.

"Then the billet door opened and Sailor Bill appeared. He looked like the wreck of the Hesperus, uniform torn, covered with dirt and

flour, and with a beautiful black eye, but he was smiling and in his hand he carried the precious tin of milk.

"We asked no questions, but opened the tin. Just as we were going to pour it out, Hungry butted in and said it should be mixed with water; he ought to know, because his sister back in Blighty had a baby, and she always mixed water with its milk. We could not dispute this authority, so water was demanded. We would not use the water in our water bottles, because Hungry said it was not fresh enough for our new mate. Hungry volunteered to get some from the well—that is, if we would promise not to feed his royal highness until he returned. We promised, because he had proved that he was an authority on the feeding of babies. By this time the rest of the section were awake and were crowding around us, asking numerous questions, and admiring our newly found friend. Sailor Bill, during Hungry's absence, took the opportunity to tell of his adventures while in quest of

the milk. His story was something like this:

" 'H'I 'ad a fair wind, an' the passage was good until h'I cyme alongside the quartermaster's shack. Then the sea got rough. When h'I got aboard, h'I could 'ear the wind blowin' through the riggin' of the supercargo (Quartermaster-Sergeant snoring) so h'I was safe. H'I set my course due north to the ration 'old, an' got my grapplin' irons on a cask o' milk, an' cyme about h'on a port tack for my homeward bound passage. But somethin' was h'amiss with my wheel. H'I ran nose h'on into 'im, caught 'im on the r'il, h'amidships. Then it was repel boarders, an' it started to blow big guns. 'Is first shot put h'out my starboard light, an' I keeled over. H'I was in the trough o' the sea, but soon righted, an' then h'it was h'a stern chyse" (chase) "with me in the lead. Gettin' h'into the h'open sea, h'I myde h'a starboard tack an' hove in this cove with the milk safely in tow.'

"Most of us did n't know what he was talk-

ing about, but surmised that he had gotten into a mix-up with the Quartermaster-Sergeant. This surmise proved correct.

"Just as Sailor Bill finished his narration, a loud splash was heard, and Hungry's voice came to us It sounded very far off: 'Help, I 'm in the well! Hurry up, I can't swim!' Then a few unintelligible words intermixed with blub! blub! and no more.

"We ran to the well, and way down we could hear an awful splashing. Sailor Bill yelled down, 'Look h'out below; stand from h'under: bucket comin'!' With that he loosed the windlass. In a few seconds a sputtering voice from the depths yelled to us, 'Haul away!'

"It was hard work, hauling him up. We had raised him about ten feet from the water, when the handle of the windlass got loose from our grip, and down went the bucket and Hungry. A loud splash came to us, and, grabbing the handle again, we worked like navvies. A volley of curses came from that well which would have shocked Old Nick himself.

"When we got Hungry safely out, he was a sight worth seeing. He did n't even notice us. Never said a word, just filled his water bottle from the water in the bucket, and went back to the billet. We followed. The mutt was still sending 'S. O. S.' with his tail on my mess tin.

"Hungry, though dripping wet, silently fixed up the milk for the dog. In appetite, the canine was a close second to him. After lapping up all he could hold, our mascot closed his eyes and his tail ceased wagging. Sailor Bill took a dry flannel shirt from his pack, wrapped the dog in it, and informed us:

" 'Me an' my myte are goin' below, so the rest of you lubbers batten down 'atches an' turn in.'

"We all wanted the honor of sleeping with the dog, but did not dispute Sailor Bill's right to the privilege. By this time the bunch were pretty sleepy and tired, and turned in without much coaxing, as it was pretty near daybreak.

"Next day we figured out that perhaps one of the French kiddies had put the dog in the grain bin, and, in the excitement of packing up and leaving, had forgotten he was there.

"Sailor Bill was given the right to christen our new mate. He called him Jim. In a couple of days Jim came around all right, and got very frisky. Every man in the section loved that dog.

"Sailor Bill was put on the crime sheet for his mix-up with the Quartermaster-Sergeant, and got seven days field punishment No. 1. During Sailor Bill's two-hour periods tied to a wheel, Jim sat at his feet, and no matter how much we coaxed him with choice morsels of food, he would not leave until Sailor Bill was untied. When Bill was loosed, Jim would have nothing to do with him—just walked away in contempt. Jim respected the king's regulations—had no use for defaulters.

"At a special meeting held by the section, Jim had the oath of allegiance read to him. He barked his consent, so we solemnly swore

him in as a soldier of the Imperial Army, fighting for king and country. Jim made a better soldier than any one of us, and died for his king and country. Died without a whimper of complaint.

"From the village we made several trips to the trenches; each time Jim accompanied us. The first time under fire he put the stump of his tail between his legs, but stuck to his post. When 'carrying in,' if we neglected to give Jim something to carry, he would make such a noise barking that we soon fixed him up.

"Each day Jim would pick out a different man of the section to follow. He would stick to this man, eating and sleeping with him, until the next day, and then it would be someone's else turn. When a man had Jim with him, it seemed as if his life was charmed. No matter what he went through, he would come out safely. We looked upon Jim as a good-luck sign, and, believe me, he was.

"Whenever it came Ikey's turn for Jim's company, he was overjoyed, because Jim would

sit in dignified silence, listening to the jew's-harp. Ikey claimed that Jim had a soul for music, which was more than he would say for the rest of us.

"Once, at daybreak, we had to go over the top in an attack. A man in the section named Dalton was selected by Jim as his mate in this affair. The gun's crew were to stay in the trench for the second wave. Dalton was very merry and had n't the least fear of misgiving as to his safety, because Jim would be with him through it all.

"In the attack, Dalton, closely followed by Jim, had gotten about seventy yards into No Man's Land, when Jim was hit in the stomach by a bullet. Poor old Jim toppled over and lay still. Dalton turned around, and, just as he did so, we saw him throw up his hands and fall face forward.

"Ikey, who was No. 3, on our gun, seeing Jim fall, scrambled over the parapet, and, through that rain of shells and bullets, raced to where Jim was, picked him up, and, tucking

him under his arm, returned to our trench in safety. If he had gone to rescue a wounded man in this way, he would have no doubt been awarded the Victoria Cross. But he only brought in poor bleeding, dying Jim."

"At this point, Ikey got very red in the face and left the dugout. Dick, with a wink at us, went on with the story.

"Ikey laid him on the firestep alongside of our gun, but we could not attend to him, because we had important work to do. So he died like a soldier, without a look of reproach for our apparently heartless treatment. Just watched our every movement until his lights burned out. After the attack, what was left of our section gathered around Jim's blood-stained body. There was n't a dry eye in the crowd.

"Next day we wrapped him in a small Union Jack belonging to Sailor Bill, and laid him to rest, a soldier of the king.

"We put a little wooden cross over his grave which read:

PRIVATE JIM
MACHINE-GUN SECTION NO. 1,
KILLED IN ACTION
June 10, 1915.
A DOG WITH A MAN'S HEART.

When Dick had finished, there was silence in the dugout. Then Sailor Bill spoke up: "It 's funny, h'everytime h'I 'ear that story h'I learn somethin' new h'about myself."

Dick winked at the rest.

THE PACIFIST

As Told by Ikey

THE PACIFIST

"WHAT do I think of a blinkin' pacifist?" asked Ikey from a corner of the dugout.

"Well, what with this bloomin' war on, an' blokes goin' West by the thousands, a pacifist or conscientious objector, in my w'y o' thinkin', is one o' two things, 'e 's either a blinkin' coward or a bloody pro-German. But it 's funny the w'y some o' them blighters, with their swankin' West h'End h'ideas back in Blighty, changes their minds when they gets out 'ere in the mud, an' gets their first glimpse o' a wooden cross. It sort o' sets 'em a-thinkin', I reckon. It 's either up against a wall in front o' a firin' squad for desertin' under fire, or else they win a blinkin' V. C. for some brave stunt. But generally they gets a 'Rise if Possible' " (R. I. P., Rest in Peace) "sign over their nappers.

"A strange thing it is, but true, those blokes never go through the trenches in an ordinary w'y like we fellows do, it 's a case o' extremes. No 'in between stuff' for them.

"Next time you 're on a burial party, at the syme time 'opin' that it 's not me you 're l'yin' aw'y, tyke a look at the third cross from the left in the fourth row as you enter that cemetery back o' that old caved in R. E." (Royal Engineers) "dugout. You know the one by the road. Well, under that cross, rests a bloke, who back in Blighty professed to be a pacifist, or a conscientious objector,—to me there 's no difference in the titles.

"When the war started, 'e would n't blinkin' well volunteer, not likely; that bloke was for stayin' at 'ome. If they wanted 'im to go out there an' fight, well, they 'ad to bloody well come an' fetch 'im. They fetched 'im all right, conscripted 'im. Then 'e ups an' refuses to fight. Said it was against 'is principles, so they stuck 'im in the N. C. C." (Non-combatant Corps) "an' sent 'im out 'ere, 'anded 'im a pick

an' shovel, an' put 'im to repairin' roads an' diggin' gryves. It did n't tyke long before 'e were properly fed up with 'is job, so 'e threw down the pick an' shovel, an' grabbed a rifle an' b'yonet. Oh, yes, 'e clicked it all right, went West, too. In fact, 'e was buried in one o' the gryves 'e 'elped to dig. H'I suppose some o' those college officers called it the 'irony o' fyte,' or some other blinkin' 'igh soundin' phryse" (phrase), "but we knows, don't we, that it were only common ordinary luck, 'cause it 's l'id down that if you 're goin' to get it, you 'll get it, no matter if you 're a gentleman's son or a bloomin' chimney-sweep.

"This blighter h'I 'm a-talkin' about, never mind 'is nyme, you 'll read it on the cross, was in my platoon when h'I was in 'C' Company, an' 'e used to give me the proper pip with 'is arguments against fightin' an' the likes o' that.

"The first time I saw 'im was in St. Armand. Our 'batt' " (battalion) "was in rest billets a-w'itin' a new draft before goin' up the line

again. You see, we 'ad clicked it pretty rough at Fromelles, an' a platoon looked like a blinkin' corporal's squad when it lined up for paryde" (parade). "Our ranks were pretty thin, what with the blokes who 'ad gone West, an' the ones sent to Blighty. H'I was pl'yin' ' 'ouse' in that h'estaminet right across from that bashed-in church on the corner, when 'is Labor Battalion cyme through an' took over billets just opposite from the h'estaminet. My tyble was near the window, an' h'I watched them pass. A sorrier bunch o' specimens o' men I never saw. It fair turned my blinkin' stomach to look at 'em, what with their pysty" (pasty) "fyces, stooped-over shoulders an' stragglin' g'it" (gait). "After lookin' at 'em, h'I registered a prayer o' thanks we 'ad a N'vy. Right then an' there h'I admired the Germans for their system o' universal tr'inin'. H'if h'England 'ad o' 'ad a little more o' it, there never would 'ave been a war, an' right now we would be back in Blighty with our wives an' nippers, instead o' sittin' 'ere in these

bloody ditches a-w'itin' for a shell to come over with our nyme an' number on it.

"After the Labor Battalion took over billets, several of 'em cyme into the h'estaminet, an' sat at a tyble near me. Now, remember, h'I don't s'y that Labor Battalions are composed of conscientious objectors, not likely, but this one 'appened to be o' that breed. They started to discuss the war an' voice their opinions about the 'top 'ats' " (Members of Parliament) "at 'ome. This bloke h'I 'm a-talkin' about was the loudest o' the bunch. 'E seemed to 'ave a grouch on everything in general. H'I listened to 'im for a few minutes chuckin' 'is w'ight about until it bloody well got on my nerves. Chuckin' up my gyme o' ' 'ouse'—an' h'I 'ad p'id" (paid) " 'alf a franc for my board—I leaned over to 'im an' said:

" 'You must be one o' those bloomin' conscientious objectors we reads about in the pypers" (papers), "one o' those blighters who don't believe in fightin' themselves, but is willin' to sit back in Blighty an' let us blokes out 'ere

do your bloody fightin' for you, while you gets a blinkin' good screw" (salary) "sittin' on a 'igh stool in some office.'

" 'E turned to me an' answered: 'It 's the likes o' you who volunteered for this war what keeps it a-goin'. If you all 'ad refused to go at first, there would n't be h'any war.'

"H'I could n't see it 'is w'y at all, an' went right back at 'im with: 'Yes, an' if it was n't for us volunteerin', the bloody German flag would now be flyin' over Buckin'am Palace an' King George would be in the Tower o' London.'

" 'E thought a minute or two an' h'answered: 'Well, what of it, one flag 's as good h'as another, an' h'as for the bloomin' King, what did 'e ever do for you, but myke you p'y taxes, so h'as 'e could bloomin' well sit around doin' nothin'.'

"This was too much for me, that blinkin' jellyfish a-slingin' mud at our King, so h'I lost my temper, an' tykin' my glass of Vin Rouge in my 'and, h'I leaned h'over close to 'im, an' said right h'under 'is nose:

" 'When you mention the King's nyme, it 's customary to stand an' drink 'is 'ealth. Per-'aps 'e never did anything special for me, but h'I 'ave never done h'anything special for 'im, an' h'even at that h'I 've done a damned sight more than you 'ave for 'im, so tyke this wine, an' drink 'is 'ealth, or h'I 'll dent that napper o' yours so you won't be able to wear that tin 'at o' yours.'

" 'E got kind o' pyle (pale) an' answered, 'Drink the King's 'ealth, not likely. H'it 's through 'im an' 'is bloody top 'ats in Parliament that h'I 'm h'out 'ere. Why in the blinkin' 'ell don't 'e do 'is h'own fightin' an' let us poor blokes alone?'

"H'I saw red, an' was just goin' to 'it 'im, when h'a big h'Irishman out o' the Royal h'Irish Rifles next to me grabs the glass o' wine from my 'and, an' lookin' the blighter in the fyce, yells:

" 'Well, h'if the King h'ain't done nothin' for you h'English, 'e 's done less for us h'Irish, but h'I volunteered to come h'out 'ere for 'im, an'

'ere h'I h'am, an' glad o' it, too, an' 'opes some d'y to get into Berlin with the King's forces. You won't drink 'is 'ealth, well, damn you, you can bathe 'is 'ealth.'

"With that, 'e threw the wine in the blighter's fyce, an' smashed 'im in the nose with 'is fist. The fellow went h'over like a log with the h'Irishman still agoin' for 'im. H'if we 'ad n't pulled 'im h'off, h'I think 'e would 'ave killed that conscientious h'objector. The military police cyme h'in to see what h'all the row was h'about. H'I 'ad clicked three d'ys C. B." (confined to barracks) "an' 'ad no business in the h'estaminet, an' did n't want to get h'arrested, so h'in the confusion, h'I myde tracks for my billet.

"The next time h'I met the bloke was when we buried h'old Smith h'out o' the 10th Platoon h'in the cemetery h'at La Bassée. 'E was one o' the gryve diggers. H'all durin' the burial service, 'e stood lookin' h'at the Union Jack with a queer look h'on 'is fyce. When h'old Smith was lowered into the ground, an' the

dirt was thrown h'on 'im, the conscientious h'objector cyme h'over to me an' pointin' h'at h'old Smith's gryve said:

" 'H'I 'ear 'e was forty-'ight years h'old, an' left a wife an' three nippers back h'in Blighty. 'E were too h'old for the draft, were n't 'e? Then 'e must 'ave volunteered.'

"H'I answered, 'O' course 'e volunteered, an' there 'e lies, deader than 'ell, but h'I 'll wager a quid 'is wife an' kids will be proud o' 'im—an' that 's more than your kids will be about you.'

" 'E sneaked h'off without answering. Three d'ys lyter" (later) "h'I nearly dropped dead when h'our lance corporal cyme h'into h'our billet with a bloody nose an' a beautifully trimmed lamp. When h'I awsked 'im 'ow 'e got knocked h'about, 'e told me that a fellow h'out o' the Non-combatant Corps, nymed Watkins (well, h'I 've spilled 'is nyme) 'ad mussed 'im up just because 'e 'ad called 'im a white-livered coward.

"Watkins clicked twenty-one d'ys No. 1 on the wheel, an' when 'is sentence was finished,

they transferred 'im to a fightin' unit an'—bang! h'into h'our platoon 'e comes.

"Many a talk h'I 'ad with 'im about that pacifist stuff, 'e 'ad n't chynged a bit h'in 'is h'ideas—but 'e kept 'is mouth shut h'about the King an' the top 'ats at 'ome.

"Then we went into the trenches, an' h'I knew 'is finish was near. A firin' squad or 'rest in peace' was to be 'is lot; they h'all get one or the other sooner or later.

"After two d'ys h'in, Fritz got rough an' h'opened h'up with a pretty stiff bombardment.

"Watkins was h'in the fourth squad h'in a dugout in the support trench when a 'Minnie' registered a direct 'it on the roof an' caved 'er h'in. H'everyone but Watkins was killed. 'Ow 'e h'escaped was a marvel, the rest o' the squad bein' smashed h'up somethin' h'awful. We collected the pieces, an' buried them the next d'y. Watkins 'elped dig the gryves.

"For two d'ys Watkins scarcely spoke a word, just went round with a faraw'y look h'on his pyle fyce.

"H'on the third night after the burial, volunteers were called for a bombin' r'id, an' h'I could scarcely believe my ears when h'I 'eard that Watkins 'ad volunteered. It was the truth all right—'e went along.

"We crawled h'out h'into No Man's Land (yes, h'I volunteered, could n't let Watkins show me h'up) under cover o' our barrage, an' w'ited. Watkins was next to me. Suddenly a star shell went h'up an' we crouched down h'in h'its light. H'I was l'yin' so that h'I could see Watkins—blime me, 'e 'ad no rifle or b'yonet.

"H'I whispered over to 'im. 'Where 's your rifle? 'E answered, 'H'I threw h'it aw'y.' Before h'I 'ad time to reply, the signal to rush the German trench was given, an' h'I lost sight of 'im.

"H'it were rough goin' h'in the German trench, an' we 'ad quite a little o' 'and-to-'and fightin'. Star-shells were goin' h'up all around us. One o' our blokes in front o' me was just goin' around the corner o' a traverse,

when a big German got 'im through the throat with 'is b'yonet an' 'e went down. Somethin' sprang past me like a wild cat an' closed with the Fritz. They both went down together. Just then another German cyme at me from the h'entrance of a dugout an' h'I were busy. H'I managed to get 'im. Then our lieutenant an' two men cyme round the traverse, an' gyve the order to get back to h'our trenches. The lieutenant stumbled over the three bodies h'in front o' us. One o' them groaned. H'it were Watkins h'all right. H'unarmed 'e 'ad sprang at the German an' with 'is *bare 'ands 'ad choked 'im to death,* but 'e 'ad a nasty jagged b'yonet wound h'in 'is right side. We managed to get 'im back to h'our trenches, but 'e died h'on the firestep. Before cashin' h'in, 'e looked up h'at the lieutenant, an' with a grin h'on 'is fyce, said:

" 'Tell the bloomin' King an' the top 'ats at 'ome that h'I died for h'England, an' h'I 'opes that my nippers, like h'old Smith's, will be proud o' their father. God syve the King!' An' 'e died.

"We buried 'im next morning.

"No, my opinion o' conscientious h'objectors an' pacifists 'as not chynged. They are h'either cowards or pro-Germans.

"You see, Watkins were n't h'either. 'E were a soldier o' the King, an' a damned good one, too."

PRIVATE GINGER

As Told by Happy

PRIVATE GINGER

THE gun's crew had been relieved from rest billets, and had again returned to their dugout. The weather was very pleasant for ducks, but not being ducks the crew stuck in the dugout. The air was heavy with smoke from their fags. Fritz, across the way, would send over an occasional whizz-bang, just to let the Tommies know that they still believed in German kultur. But this did not bother our crew because in the dugout they were safe from whizz-bangs, and they did not give a darn what Fritz was thinking about kultur; but they did agree with the Kaiser about that place in the sun business.

Dick turned to Yank, and asked:

"Remember Burton of A Company? Think he was in the Third Platoon; the fellow that was recommended for the V. C. and refused it.

Got the recommendation for rescuing his platoon commander under fire."

Yank answered in the affirmative, and Dick "carried on" with:

"I never could see into that affair, because they seemed to be the worst of enemies. The officer was always picking on him, used to have him 'on the crime sheet' for the least offense. Got him several days of extra pack drill, and once he clicked twenty-one days' crucifixion" (Field Punishment No. 1, tied to a limber wheel two hours per day for twenty-one days). "No matter what dirty fatigue or working party came along, Burton's name was sure to head the list.

"This Burton appeared to be a surly sort of a chap. Kept to himself a whole lot, always brooding. Did n't have many friends in the Company, either. There seemed to be something on his mind. Most of the Company men said his sweetheart back in Blighty had thrown him down for some other bloke."

Happy butted in: "That 's the way with

this world, always hammering at a fellow. Well, I *know* this Burton, and there 's not a better mate in the world, so let that sink into your nappers."

"Don't get sore, Happy," said Dick. "If you don't mind, let 's have the story. I meant no offense. Just naturally curious, that 's all. You can't deny that the whole affair has been quite a mystery to the Brigade. Spit it out and get it off your chest."

"Let 's have it, Happy," they all chimed in chorus.

Happy, somewhat mollified, lighted a Woodbine, took two or three deep puffs, and started:

"Well, it was this way, but don't ask any questions until I am through.

"You know Burton is n't what you 'd call a prize beauty when it comes to looks. He 's about five six in height, stocky, a trifle bow-legged, and pug-nosed. To top this, he has a crop of red hair and his clock" (face) "is the boarding-house for every freckle in the United Kingdom. But strong,—say, that fellow could

make Samson look like a consumptive when he got started.

"In Blighty, before the war, Burton and this Lieutenant—his name is Huston—went to the same college.

"Huston was nearly six feet high and slender. Sort of a dandy, fair-haired, lots of dough, which he never got by working,—his papa wished it on him when he went West" (died). "He was good-looking and had a way with the girls, which made them think he was the one and only. Did n't care much for athletics. Girls, dances, and card parties were more in his line.

"They were in the same class. Burton was working his way through, and consequently, Huston looked down on him as a bally bounder. Among the athletes, Burton was popular. Huston was n't.

"Burton was engaged, or thought he was, to a pretty fine girl by the name of Betty. She thought Burton, or 'Ginger,' as she called him, was the finest thing out. One day Ginger took

her to see a foot-ball game at the college; he was playing on the team, so she had to sit it out alone. During this 'sitting out,' she met Huston, and the trouble started. He was dead gone on her and she liked him, so he made hay while the sun was shining.

"She did n't exactly turn Ginger down, but he was no boob, and saw how things were, so he eased out of the running, although it almost broke his heart. He certainly loved that girl.

"This state of affairs widened the gap between Huston and Burton. They hated each other pretty fiercely, but Burton never went out of his way to show it, while Huston took every opportunity to vent his spleen. Ginger saw Betty very seldom, and when he did, she was generally accompanied by Huston.

"Then the war came. Ginger immediately enlisted as a private. He could have had a commission, but did not want to take a chance of having to mix with Huston.

"A few weeks after Ginger's enlistment, Huston joined too—was losing prestige in

Betty's eyes by staying in mufti. He went into the O. T. C." (Officers' Training Corps). "In seven months he received his commission, and was sent to France. Ginger had been out three months.

"By one of the many strange coincidences that happen in this world, Huston was sent to the battalion and company that Ginger was in, and was put in command of Ginger's platoon. Then things happened.

"Ginger could hardly believe his eyes when he first saw Huston, and knew he was to be his platoon commander. He felt he was in for it good and plenty.

"That night Huston sent for Ginger and had a talk with him. Tried to make him believe that he harbored no animosity, and then detailed him as mail orderly, the first act of a campaign of petty cruelty. By being mail orderly, Ginger would have to handle Betty's letters to Huston, and Huston's letters to her. Ginger saw through it immediately, and his hate burned stronger. From that night on, it was

one indignity after another, just a merciless persecution, but Ginger never complained; just stored up each new act and swore vengeance.

"It came to such a pass that Ginger could bear it no longer. He decided to kill Huston, and only waited for a favorable opportunity to present itself. I think it was only his love for Betty which had held him back so long; he could n't bear the thought of her grieving for her dead lover. You see, Ginger thought Betty was madly in love with Huston.

"One night, in the front line trench, orders were received that after an hour's intense bombardment of the enemy's lines, the company would go over the top at six the next morning. Huston was to go over with the first wave, while Ginger was in the second. Here was his chance.

"All that night he crouched on the firestep, musing and brooding, nursing his revenge. He prayed to Betty to forgive him for what he was going to do.

"After the bombardment the next morning, over went the first wave, a line of bayonets and madly cheering men. Ginger only saw one in that crowd; his eyes never left Huston. His finger twitched and caressed the trigger of his rifle—his long looked-for opportunity had come.

"The first wave had gone about sixty yards, when Ginger let out a curse. Huston had been hit and was down, and he saw his revenge slipping through his fingers. But no, Huston was not dead. He was trying to rise to his feet! He was up—hopping on one leg—with the blood pouring from the other. Then he fell again, but was soon sitting up, bandaging his wounded leg, using a tourniquet from his first-aid packet.

"A surge of unholy joy ran through Ginger. Lifting his safety latch on his rifle, unheeding the rain of bullets which were ripping and tearing the sandbagged parapet about him, he took deliberate aim at Huston. Then he saw a vision of Betty, dressed in black, with tear-

stained eyes. With a muttered curse Ginger threw the rifle from him, climbed over the parapet and raced across No Man's Land. No act of his should bring tears in Betty's brown eyes. He would save her worthless lover, and then get killed himself—it did n't matter.

"Reaching Huston, he hissed at him:

" 'Damn you, I was going to kill you, but I won't. I 'll carry you back to Betty. But always remember, it was the man you robbed who saved your worthless life, you despicable skunk.'

"Huston murmured: 'Forgive me, Burton, but for God's sake, get me out of this. I 'll be killed—for God's sake, man, hurry, hurry!'

" 'That 's it, is it? Whine, damn you, whine! It 's music to my ears. Lieutenant Huston begging a 'bally bounder' for his life, and the bounder giving it to him. I would to God that Betty could see and hear you now!'

"With that Ginger stooped, and by main strength lifted Huston onto his back and stag-

gered toward our lines. The bullets and pieces of shrapnel were cracking and swishing all around. He had gone about fifty yards when a piece of shell hit his left arm just below the shoulder. Down he went, Huston with him, but was soon up, his left arm dangling and swinging at his side. Turning to Huston, who was lying on his back, he said:

" 'I am hard hit—it 's your life or mine. We 're only ten yards from our trench. Try to make it on your own. You ought to be able to crawl in.'

"But Huston answered:

" 'Burton, don't leave me here, I am bleeding to death. For the love of God, get me in! You can have Betty, money, anything I have, it is all yours,—just save my life. Answer me, man, answer—'

" 'You want my answer, do you? Well, take it, and damn you!'

"With that, Ginger slapped the officer in the face. Then, grabbing him by the collar with his right arm, the blood soaking his tunic from

the shell wound in his left, Ginger slowly dragged Huston to the trench, and fainted.

"A mighty cheer went up from our lines. Stretcher-bearers took them both to an advanced first-aid post, and their journey to Blighty and Betty was started.

"On the trip over, Ginger never regained consciousness. They landed in a hospital in England and were put in beds next to each other. You see, at that time, officers and men went to the same hospital.

"Ginger was taken up into the 'pictures' (operating theatre), where his arm was amputated at the shoulder. Huston's wound was slight,—bullet through the calf of leg.

"While Ginger was coming out of ether he told all he knew. A Red Cross nurse with tear-dimmed eyes was holding his hand. Occasionally she would look across at Huston in the next bed; he would slowly nod his head at each questioning glance of hers, while the red blood of shame mounted to his temples.

"Then Ginger came to. He saw a beautiful

vision. Thought he was dreaming. Sitting by his bed, dressed in a Red Cross nurse's uniform, was Betty, Huston's Betty, holding his hand! Betty, with tears in her eyes, but this time tears of joy. The sweat came out on his forehead. It could n't be true! He gasped out the one word—

" 'Betty!'

"Stooping over, the vision kissed him on the lips, and murmured:

" 'My Ginger, you have come back to Betty.'

"Then he slept. Next morning the Colonel of the hospital came to Ginger's bedside and congratulated him, telling him that he had been recommended for the V. C. Ginger refused the V. C. from the Government; said he had not earned it; would not give the reasons, but persisted in his refusal. You know they can't force you to take a V. C.

"Five months later Ginger and Betty were married. She cuts his meat for him now; says that all his faults were contained in his left arm. He lost that. So you see, Ginger was

somewhat of a man, after all, was n't he, mates?"

They agreed that he was. Ikey asked Happy how he came to know these details. He answered:

"Well, you see, it 's this way. Betty happens to be my sister. Gimme a fag, someone. I am about talked out."

Sailor Bill mumbled out loud:

"I never thought there could be such a rotter as Huston in the English Army."

Happy, hearing this, came back with:

"Just a minute, Sailor. Huston was n't a rotter at heart. It was a good lesson for him. When he recovered from his wound, he came out here again. Made quite a record for himself, won the Military Cross and a D. S. O. He was killed at Wipers—not so long ago, either.

"You know, the little wooden cross settles all debts in this world. Dying for one's country in a righteous cause, according to my view, entitles one to a reserved seat in Heaven."

THE LONE TREE SENTINEL

As Told by Dick

THE LONE TREE SENTINEL

IT was Dick's turn again. As was characteristic of him, he fidgeted nervously, looked around shamefacedly, and made one or two false starts. Then, gaining courage, he took a deep breath from the Woodbine he was smoking, and turning to Yank, said:

" 'Yank, I 'm going to tell you of a queer happening that took place before you joined this Section of the Suicide Club, and believe me, you will have to form your own conclusions—it has been a sore point of discussion among us ever since, and—"

"I know, it 's about Jerry's brother an' the 'aunted Lone Tree," interrupted Ikey. "Now I want to tell you, Yank, it was no spirit at all, it was only 'eart—"

"You close your clock," said Dick, breaking into the middle of Ikey's speech; it 's my turn

at 'gassing,' and you know the law of this dugout: One story at a time and no interruptions from the rest. You have your opinion about Jerry, and I have mine. We both had a fair chance to form these opinions, and Yank 's going to get the same square deal, without your influencing him by any of your propaganda remarks to swing him on your side. That 's final, so shut up until I 'm through."

"Oh, all right then. If that 's the w'y you look at it, go a'ead," answered Ikey, "but, believe me, you had better tell the story h'exackly the w'y it 'appened, or I 'll h'interrupt, dugout law or no dugout law."

"Shut up, Ikey," 'Curly' interposed. "Go ahead, Dick, we all might have something to say, unless you keep to the 'straight and narrow,' because we all have opinions about haunts and spirits."

Dick commenced.

"One afternoon a few months back, our gun's crew was sitting on the firestep, just in front of Gommecourt Wood.

"Happy was busily engaged in rigging up a flash screen to hide the flare of our gun, which we were to mount on the parapet that night.

"Sailor Bill—he had n't at that time joined the Suicide Club—was sewing a piece of khaki cloth over his tin hat, because the night previous while on sentry go, standing in the moonlight, with his head over the top, the rays from the moon had reflected from his steel helmet, and a couple of German bullets had knocked up the dirt within a few feet of his head.

"Hungry was wrestling with a tin of bully beef, while Curly was hunting for cooties, or answering letters, I forget which.

"Ikey, with our mascot, Private Jim, was sitting on the firestep, his back leaning against a traverse, picking mud out of his harmonica with a sliver of wood. Private Jim was happy and contented, not knowing the fate in store for him. Two days later he was killed by a German bullet and we buried him behind the lines like any other bloke would be buried, wooden cross and all.

"After working a few minutes at the harmonica, Ikey paused, put it to his lips, and blew into it; a squeaky, rattly noise resulted,—you know the usual kind. Then, with a deep sigh, he resumed the picking process.

"I had just finished a letter home, and was sighing for the time to come when I would take the Kaiser, a prisoner, back to good old Dublin.

"Although it was warm and sunny, still the floor of the trench was about three inches deep in soft, sticky mud,—worse than it is now.

"On my right I heard a low muttering and a splashing in the mud, and around the traverse, into our firebay, carrying a box of ammo" (ammunition), "came the weirdest looking soldier I had ever seen. He was tall and gaunt, his long back seemed to bend in three places at once under the weight of the box of ammo on his shoulder. His tunic fitted him like a loose sling on a rifle, kind of flappy, his trousers were tight-fitting, except at the knees, where they were lumpy like a pocket full of rocks. From the top of his boots to his knees there was just

space. I 'll be damned if I can describe it, but those feet, just like a doll's! How he could balance such a swaying piece of skin and bones on them was a marvel. His neck was just stretching, thin and stretching, sort of curious-like. His head looked like—blime me, what did it look like—it looked like—where did I see that—by the King's hat—I 've got it—say, Yank, remember that American coat of arms you showed us yesterday—well, his head was identical with the head of that eagle on it—thought I had seen it before when you showed it to me—but could n't exactly place it."

"By the blinkin' 'ell, Dick 's right," ejaculated Hungry—"I noticed the resemblance, too."

"As he passed in front of me he turned his gaze in my direction and a cold shiver ran up and down my spine as I looked into his eyes. Looked like two holes burned in a blanket. They were uncanny; a sort of vacant stare, as if the owner of them was looking into the Great Beyond; but his face was just a dirty pasty

white as if he had been brought up on a diet of soap. As he staggered through the firebay, his back bending in and out under the weight of the ammo and passed from view around the next traverse, it seemed to me as if the Grim Reaper had stalked through and had marked us for a 'Rest in Peace' sign.

"Shuddering a little, I instinctively turned my eyes in the direction of the rest of the crew. They were also staring at the traverse, around which the gloomy looking soldier had disappeared.

"My heart sank to zero and I had a sinking sensation in the region of my stomach, and on the parados in front of me, like a cinematograph on a screen, flashed a cemetery, dotted all over with little wooden crosses. I felt queer and uneasy.

"Curly, in a low, half frightened voice, exclaimed:

" 'Blime me, that was 'Aunted Jerry's brother, the one who clicked it by the old lone tree. If you blokes want to get the creeps, you

ought to 'ear 'im talk. Some o' the fellows claim that it 's unlucky to get 'im started. They sye that one o' 'is 'earers is sure to click it within a few days' time, but if you fellows want to tyke the chance, I 'll go over to 'is section, which is occupyin' the second fireb'y on our left, and see if I can get 'im to tell us about 'is brother. But, now mind, this fellow is a little balmy in 'is napper, so don't myke fun of 'im.'

"I confessed that I was glad to be rid of him, but my curiosity overcame my fears, and I asked Curly to go ahead. The rest of the crew weakly assented, so Curly went after Jerry's brother. In about twenty minutes he returned with him. Jerry's brother came over and sat on the firestep next to me, his face blending in with the weather-bleached sand-bags on the parapet. He sat silent for a few minutes, and then, in a thin, piping, high-pitched voice, which I will try to imitate, Cockney, and all,—spoke:—

" 'So you want to 'ear about Jerry, do you?

Better not, better not, 'cause h'it is in writin' among th' spirits that h'every time I talk o' one o' them, someone who listens, or perhaps me, will 'ave to be joinin' of 'em before long. You calls it a bein' dead, but it h'ain't true, there h'ain't no long dead, nothin' dies, just wanders an' wanders. Their bodies is what 's dead, only shells what 's been shed an' left behind.'

"I was frightened stiff, because I admit I believe in ghosts, even if Ikey does n't, and I did n't want to run the risk of clicking it later on by listening to the story. Even Jim felt my way; he had his tail between his legs and was trembling all over and moaning his protest in dog language. But of course, Ikey insisted that the story be told, so mournfully shaking his head, Jerry's brother carried on:

" 'You should n't o' defied the spirits, but it is written that I 'ave to talk when awsked. I 'm the Recruitin' Sergeant for the absent voices, detyled h'in Jerry's plyce.

" 'You want to 'ear about Jerry? Fools—they called 'im 'Aunted Jerry, but 'e were n't

'aunted, 'e could just see—'e could see into the future—could sort o' tell what was a-goin' to 'appen. 'E talked to the dead bodies, the deserted 'omes o' the spirits, an' they, 'overin' in the h'air, 'eard 'im, an' talked back, an' told 'im what was a-goin' to 'appen.

" 'E alw'ys 'ad spirits h'around 'im,—ghosts, you call 'em, but there h'ain't no such thing as ghosts,—they 're souls a'wanderin' h'around—a'lookin' for recruits for the h'army o' the dead, as you ignorantly calls 'em. They 're about us now—'

"I slowly eased down the firestep away from him.

" 'Jerry used to talk to the departed. 'E would sit in a cemetery h'at night, in rest billets, an' receive messages from them what cawn't speak no more. Not the ones as what 'ad just been buried, it tykes time, it tykes time, but the ones what were just bones, the trained spirits.

" 'Up the line, Jerry 'ad 'is mission. At night 'e would crawl out in front, an' listen

to the voices, when the wind was dead and could n't carry 'em. The Lone Tree was 'is 'eadquarters. Bodies were a-plenty at h'its roots, reconnoitering patrols, h'English an' German, meet out there.'

"Then he paused. A faint wind was blowing. Jerry's brother listened intently, sighed, and with an unearthly fire burning in his eyes, said—

" 'The Lone Tree is a-callin', it 's a-callin' me. Jerry is tryin' to myke me h'understand. I 'm listenin', Jerry, I 'm a-listenin'.'

"With that he stood up on the firestep, head and shoulders over the top. Blinking broad daylight it was, too. We were all afraid to pull him down. Looking out towards the Lone Tree, he started murmuring,—

" 'Louder, Jerry, louder. I cawn't understand, the voices are mixed. Jerry, it 's your brother a-callin'; what is it, lad, what is it?'

"Every second we expected to see his brains spatter the parapet from a German sniper's bullet. Suddenly, Crack! Crack! Crack! three

bullets struck the parapet and went singing over the trench. We all ducked, but apparently Jerry's brother never moved.

"With a deep sigh he sank onto the firestep, saying, 'I can 'ear the voices, but as yet cawn't understand 'em, but I will—I will—it tykes trainin'.'

"I believe he did not know that he had been fired at. Anyway it never fazed him. My blood curdled at the thought of how near he had come to joining those spirits of his.

"Ikey placed his hand on Jerry's brother's knee and said:

" 'Righto, mate, we know you can see far beyond us, but tell us about 'Aunted Jerry an' the poem 'e wrote the d'y before 'e clicked it at the Lone Tree.'

"Jerry's brother nodded in a comprehending way, and unbuttoning the pocket of his tunic, drew out a creased and muddy piece of paper, which he reverently and fondly opened out upon his knee, and then in an unnatural, singsong voice, which sent cold shivers up and down

my spine, recited the following, reading from the paper."

At this point Dick started searching the pockets of his tunic, pulling out, piece by piece, a collection of stuff that would have made a junk-man sit up and take notice. A look of disappointment came over Dick's face; he paused, thought hard for about a minute, and then with an exclamation of satisfaction, went over to his pack and extricated therefrom an old leather wallet, opened it and carefully removed a piece of paper, muddy, creased and torn. With a sigh of relief he exclaimed, "Blime me, I thought I had lost that poem. One of Jerry's brother's mates gave it to me after,—but that would be telling the story backwards."

Squinting very hard at the paper in his hand, Dick read aloud:

"Between the lines, in 'No Man's Land,'
With foliage gone, an' trunk what 's torn,
A lonely sentry tykes 'is stand,
Silently watchin' from morn to morn.

When sun is gone, an' moon is bright,
An' spreads its rays o' ghost-like beams;
H'against the sky, that tree o' blight,
A ghastly 'angman's gibbet seems.

When night is black, the wind's faint sigh
Through its shell-torn branches moans
A call to men, 'To die, to die!'
They answers with groans and groans,

But obey the call, for 'more an' more,'
An' Death sits by an' grins an' grins,
Watchin' the fast growin' score,
'Arvest of 'is sentry's whims.

There they lie 'uddled, friend an' foe,
Ghastly 'eaps, h'English, French an' 'Un,
An' still those piles forever grow,
The sorry toll is never done.

No wooden cross to mark their fall,
No tombstone theirs, no carven rocks,
Just the Lone Tree with its grim call,
Which forever mocks an' mocks."

"When Jerry's brother had finished, a dead silence ensued. I nervously lighted a fag, and out of the corner of my eye noticed that Sailor Bill was uneasily squirming on the firestep.

"Letting out a sigh, which seemed to whistle between his teeth, our 'guest' carried on:

" 'Jerry were n't much at cheerful writin', were 'e? But 'e 'ad a callin'. H'even back 'ome in Blighty, 'e were n't much for lights nor fun. 'E took after our mother. The neighbors called 'er 'aunted, too, but she were n't. She could see things like Jerry. Used to talk to the governor, set 'is plyce at table an' 'e dead these fifteen years."

"Then he went on telling us about the Lone Tree as if we had never seen it, and there it blinking well was about a hundred yards from us out in front. Many a time at night on patrol work have I stumbled over a dead body at its base. I tell you, Yank, it was creepy work listening to him.

" 'This 'ere Lone Tree Sentinel, Jerry writes about in 'is poetry, is an h'old tree in No Man's Land a 'underd yards or more from the firestep. It is pretty well knocked about by bullets an' shell fragments. It mykes a good 'eadquarters for spirits an' voices, stickin' sort

o' lonely-like up h'against the sky at night. It are the guide-post o' the dead, h'even though patrols uses it to show 'em the w'y back to their trenches. But those what follows its pointin' arm 'as started on their w'y to the absent voices.'

"We all shivered because every one of us had used that guide-post more than once while out in front.

" 'Out there in the blackness h'it 's easy to lose your w'y h'unless you 'ave spirits a-guidin' you, like me an' Jerry 'as. At h'its roots were many dead, just a rottin' out there, a tykin' o' their trainin' fer the spirits. When the wind was a-blowin' our w'y, to the ignorant it were sort o' h'unpleasant, but Jerry an' me knew, h'it were their message, they was answering the roll o' the spirits.

" 'At that time No Man's Land were no plyce for mortals what with the bullets an' shells a-singin' o' their death song d'y an' night, but Jerry did n't mind, 'e 'ad 'is mission an' 'ad to answer the call o' the voices.

" 'Every time our Captain called for volunteers fer a raidin' party or reconnoitering patrol, 'Aunted Jerry, as you call 'im, 'ad to volunteer 'cause 'e was a recruitin' fer the dead, same as me. After a while 'e was never awsked if 'e wanted to go, 'is nyme was just plyced on the list as a-goin'. When 'e returned from h'out in front 'e used to go to 'is dugout an' if any o' the party 'ad gone West 'e put their nymes in a book an' used to sit an' talk to them nymes. 'E were a teachin' 'em their first lesson o' the voices. 'E alw'ys kep' h'account o' the number o' dead at the tree. 'E could see in the dark, could Jerry, syme as me.

" 'Sometimes in the d'ytime 'e would rig up a periscope on 'is own, and sit on the firestep for hours a-lookin' out in No Man's Land at the Lone Tree, and the bodies around it. This sort o' got on our Captain's nerves, an' 'e gave Jerry orders not to use a periscope. After this order Jerry used to sit h'off by 'imself on the firestep a-musin' an' a-musin'. The other

blokes laughed at 'im, but I knew what he were a-doin'—'e were a-talkin' to the spirit o' the Lone Tree.

" 'Then 'e got sort o' reckless, an' because it were against orders for 'im to use a periscope, 'e used to, in the bloomin' d'ytime, stick 'is 'ead over the top an' gaze at the Lone Tree. Bullets from German snipers would kick up the dirt an' tear the sand-bags all around 'im, but none of 'em ever 'it 'im. No bullet ever myde could kill Jerry, 'e were protected.

" 'The rest o' the blokes in the trench would pull 'im down off the firestep. They thought they were a-savin' 'is life, but Jerry were n't afraid from bullets. 'E knew, same as me, that they could n't 'arm 'im. Then our Captain—'e 'ad brains, 'e 'ad—said that Jerry was balmy, an' gave orders to the Sergeant-M'jor to tyke 'im back to the Doctors to send 'im to Blighty. Jerry was told about this the night before the mornin' 'e was to leave. 'E was greatly upset, 'e was, an' all that d'y did nothin' but talk to the spirits—the air were full of 'em

—I could 'ear o' their voices. About ten o'clock Jerry was missed. The next morning 'e was still a missin'. For two d'ys nothin' was 'eard o' Jerry. Then the Royal Irish Rifles took over a sector o' trench on our right. A lot o' our blokes told 'em about Jerry bein' missin'. A few o' 'em got around me, an' I described Jerry to 'em, but I were n't afraid for Jerry —I knew where 'e was—'e were with his spirits.

" 'That night an Irish patrol went out, an' when they returned they brought a body with 'em; said they 'd found it at the foot o' the Lone Tree. It were Jerry, all right, but 'e were n't 'it nowhere. Two bloomin' doctors examined 'im, lookin' for wounds, but could n't find none, because there were n't none. 'E was dead, all right, an' that bloomin' Captain—'e 'ad brains, 'e 'ad—was responsible for 'is death. 'E 'ad tried to tyke Jerry aw'y from 'is spirits, so Jerry crawled out to the Lone Tree to answer its call. 'E answered it, and now 'e 's with the spirits 'e loves, an' sometime I 'll join 'im an'

'em. 'E 's with 'em, all right, I know—I know."

"Just then Jim started to whimper. If the truth were known, we all felt like whimpering.

"Without another word, Jerry's brother got up, and muttering to himself, passed out of sight around the traverse. As he disappeared from view, Sailor Bill exclaimed:

" 'Blawst my deadlights, but if a bloke like that ever shipped in the Navy, in a fortnight's time 'e would bloomin' well be an Admiral, because 'e would be the only one left in the blinkin' Navy. Gives me the proper creeps. 'Ow in 'ell 'is company stands for 'im, I don't know. 'Ow about it, Curly—why 'as n't 'e been sent to Blighty as balmy?'

" 'I 'll tell you, Bill,' answered Curly; 'this bloke only gets these fits occasionally. He 's a damned good soldier—always on the job, and next to Corporal French, and his brother, Haunted Jerry, he 's the best scout for work in No Man's Land that ever put a foot in these blinkin' ditches. It 's only lately that he 's

been having these spells so often, and yesterday the Sergeant-Major told me that he was under observation, and that it would only be a short time before he was shipped back.'

"Jim was still whimpering. This got on Ikey's nerves and he gave Jim a sharp cuff on the side of the head. This was the first time a hand had been raised against Jim since he had joined us months back. He gave Ikey a piteous look, and, sticking his stump of a tail between his legs, disappeared from the firebay.

"All afternoon we tried to be as cheerful as possible, but our merriment was very artificial. Every laugh seemed forced and strained. Haunted Jerry had sure put a damper on us."

Yank started to speak, but Dick, noticing his action, held up his hand and said,—

"That is n't all, Yank, the important part is yet to come, and after hearing the rest, if you don't believe in spirits, my idea of your intelligence will be greatly lessened.

"Shortly after Jerry's brother told us his story, we were relieved and went into rest bil-

lets. A month later we again took over the same trench and there was the Lone Tree same as usual, except for a part of the branch being shot away, the end looking just like a human hand beckoning. It certainly was queer looking. I hated to look at it against the sky. Seemed to be calling me.

"As fate would have it, Jerry's brother's company was on our right. I saw him several times but avoided him. Damn me, I admit I was afraid of him.

"Then our brigade got busy and decided to go over the top. The barrage lifted at six in the morning, and the first wave went over. We were in the second. The rifle and machine-gun fire was hot and the first wave soon thinned out before they had gone thirty yards.

"A fellow in the first wave, named Johnson, clicked it in the knee from a bit of shrapnel. I could see him through the periscope. He fell, tried to get up, got hit again and went down. He was only about six yards in front of our wire.

"After going down the second time, his tunic on the right shoulder red with blood, he remained motionless. I thought he was dead, but no, in a short while he moved and slowly rose on his good knee, pushing on the ground with his left arm, and started to call to us. Down on my right, a tussle took place among the blokes crouching on the firestep and suddenly a form loomed over the parapet and I saw Jerry's brother running high through a lane in the wire. He came to the wounded man who, seeing him, tried to crawl away. Jerry's brother stopped and, standing erect, stretched both arms in the direction of the Lone Tree. Just then a Boche machine-gun turned loose. The bullets knocked up the dirt all around the two. Jerry's brother never noticed them, but stooping, picked up Johnson, as if he were a feather, and throwing him over his shoulder, head hanging down in back of him, *walked* toward our trench. When he reached the parapet he let Johnson down. Half of Johnson's head was

gone, literally torn off, and Jerry's brother was n't hit. Seeing that Johnson was dead, Jerry paused, stooped over and gave him a long look, then, facing in the direction of the Lone Tree, he again stretched out his arms, and shouted, 'I 'm a-comin', Jerry, I 'm a-comin', one more, Jerry, one more.' Stooping, he lifted the dead Johnson on his shoulder and started at a slow run toward the Lone Tree, Johnson's arms dangling and flopping about his legs. Just then the word came for the second wave to go over.

"That night we were back in our original trench,—had n't gained an inch. The stretcher-bearers brought in lots of bodies from out in front, among them Johnson and Jerry's brother. Yes, he was dead. And, Yank, the doctors could not find a mark on him, while Johnson's body had twenty-eight wounds. Now, if that is n't spirits, what is it?"

" 'Eart trouble," ejaculated Ikey.

But Yank, slowly shaking his head, left the dugout and went into the fire trench.

CHRISTMAS IN A DUGOUT

As Told by Yank while on a Working Party, to a Squad of Royal Engineers, in Their Dugout

CHRISTMAS IN A DUGOUT

"YOU say you fellows have just come out and want to know how I enjoyed last Christmas. Well, I 'll tell you the circumstances, and let you judge for yourself about the enjoyment part of it.

"I guess nearly all of you met our gun's crew at that show we gave at S——, so it will be unnecessary to introduce them. As well as I remember this is what happened:

"It was Christmas Eve, and cold; not the kind of cold which sends the red blood tingling through your veins and makes you want to be 'up and at 'em,' but that miserable damp kind that eats into the marrow of your bones, attacking you from the rear and sending cold shivers up and down your spinal column. It gives you a feeling of dread and loneliness.

"The three of us, Curly, Happy, and myself, were standing at the corner of Yankee Avenue

and Yiddish Street, waiting for the word 'Stand to,' upon which we were to mount our machine-gun on the parapet and go on watch for two hours with our heads sticking over the top.

"Yankee Avenue was the name of the fire trench, while Yiddish Street was the communication trench leading to the rear. You see, we were occupying 'Y' Sector of the front line of our brigade.

"The trench was muddy, and in some places a thin crust of ice was beginning to form around the edges of the puddles.

"We had wrapped our feet and legs with empty sand-bags, and looked like snow shovelers on Fifth Avenue. My teeth were chattering with the cold. Happy was slapping his hands on his thighs, while Curly had unbuttoned one of the buttons on his overcoat, and with his left hand was desperately trying to reach under his right armpit,—no doubt a 'cootie' had gone marketing for its Christmas dinner.

"Then came the unwelcome 'Stand to,' and it was up on the firestep for us, to get our gun mounted. This took about five minutes.

"Curly, while working away, was muttering: 'Blime me, Christmas Eve, and 'ere I am somew'eres in Frawnce, 'alf starved with the cold.'

"Happy was humming, 'Keep the Home Fires Burning.' Right then, any kind of a home fire would have been very welcome.

"It was black as pitch in No Man's Land. Curly stopped muttering to himself and Happy's humming ceased. There was serious work in front of us. For two hours we had to penetrate that blackness with our straining eyes to see that Fritz did not surprise us with some German Kultur Christmas stunt.

"Suddenly, Happy, who was standing on the firestep next to me, gripped my arm, and in a low, excited whisper, asked:

" 'Did you see that out in front, Yank, a little to the right of that black patch in the barbed wire?'

"Turning my eyes in the direction indicated, with my heart pounding against my ribs, I waited for something to develop.

"Sure enough, I could make out a slight movement. Happy must have seen it at the same time, because he carefully eased his rifle over the top, ready for instant use. My rifle was already in position. Curly was fumbling with the flare pistol. Suddenly a loud 'plop,' as he pulled the trigger, and a red streak shot up into the air as the star shell described an arc out in front; it hit the ground and burst, throwing out a white, ghostly light. A frightened 'meouw,' and a cat, with speed clutch open, darted from the wire in front of us, jumped over our gun and disappeared into the blackness of the trench. Curly ducked his head, and Happy let out a weak, squeaky laugh. I was frozen stiff with fear. Pretty soon the pump action of my heart was resumed, and once more I looked out into No Man's Land.

"For the remainder of our two hours on

guard nothing happened. Then we 'turned over' to the second relief and, half frozen, waded through the icy mud to the entrance of our dugout.

"From the depths of the earth came the notes of a harmonica playing 'Pack Up Your Troubles in Your Old Kit Bag, and Smile, Smile, Smile.' Stumbling down the muddy steps we entered the dugout. This was a regular dugout, not like the two-by-four one we generally had wished on us.

"Eight boys of our machine-gun section, sitting on their packs, had formed a circle around a wooden box. In an old ammunition tin six candles were burning. I inwardly shuddered at this extravagance but suddenly remembered that it was Christmas Eve. Sailor Bill was making cocoa over the flames of a 'Tommy's cooker,' while Ikey was toasting bread in front of a fire bucket, the fumes from which nearly choked us.

"As soon as we made our appearance in the dugout the circle stood up, and, as is usual with

you English, unselfishly made room for us to get around the fire bucket to thaw out our stiffened joints. In about twenty minutes or so the cold of the trench was forgotten and we joined in the merriment. The musician put his harmonica away, which action was greatly appreciated by the rest of us. It was Ikey. Bursting with importance, 'Sailor Bill' addressed us:

" 'Gentlemen, it is now time for this ship's company to report progress as to what they have done for the Christmas feed which is to be held tomorrow at eight bells. Yank, let 's hear yours.'

"I reported one dozen eggs, two bottles of white wine, one bottle of red wine, eight packets of Gold Flake 'fags' and one quart bottle of champagne, which had cost me five francs, my last and lonely note on the Banque de France, at a French estaminet.

"'This report was received with a cheer. Ikey was next in order. He proudly stated that he had saved his rum issue for the last

eleven days, and consequently was able to donate to the feast his water bottle, three-fourths full of rum. We knew he had 'swiped' the rum, but said nothing because this would help out in making brandy sauce for the plum pudding. Sailor Bill informed us that he had a fruit cake, a bottle of pickled walnuts, and two tins of deviled ham, which had been sent out to him from London. Each man had something to report. I carefully made a list of the articles opposite the name of the person donating them, and turned the list over to Bill, who was to act as cook on the following day.

"Just then Lance Corporal Hall came into the dugout and, warming his hands over the fire bucket, said:

" 'If you blokes want to hear something that will take you home to Blighty, come up into the fire trench a minute.'

"None of us moved. That fire bucket was too comfortable. After much coaxing, Sailor Bill, Ikey, and myself followed Hall out of the

dugout up into the fire trench. A dead silence reigned, and we started to return. Hall blocked our way, and whispered:

" 'Just a minute, boys, and listen.'

"Pretty soon, from the darkness out in front, we heard the strains of a cornet playing 'It 's a Long, Long Trail We 're Winding.' We stood entranced till the last note died out. After about a four or five minute wait the strains were repeated, and then silence. I felt lonely and homesick.

"Out of the firebay on our left a Welsh voice started singing the song. The German cornet player must have heard it, because he picked up the tune and accompanied the singer on his cornet. I had never heard anything so beautiful in my life before. The music from the German trench suddenly ceased, and in the air overhead came the sharp Crack! Crack! of machine gun bullets, as some Boche gunner butted in on the concert. We ducked and returned to our dugout.

"The men were all tired out, and soon rasp-

ing snores could be heard from under the cover of blankets and overcoats.

"The next day was Christmas, and we eagerly awaited the mail, which was to be brought up by the ration party at noon.

"Not a shot or shell had been fired all morning. The sun had come out, and although the trenches were slippery with mud, still it was warm, and we felt the Christmas spirit running through our veins. We all turned in and cleaned up the dugout. Making reflectors out of ammunition tins, sticking them into the walls of the dugout, we placed a lighted candle in each. Sailor Bill was hustling about, preparing the Christmas spread. He placed a waterproof sheet on the floor, and adding three blankets spread another waterproof over the top for a table-cloth, and arranged the men's packs around the edges for chairs.

"Presently the welcome voice of our Sergeant came from the entrance of the dugout:

" 'Come on, me lads, lend a 'and with the post.'

"There was a mad rush for the entrance. In a couple of minutes or so the boys returned, staggering under a load of parcels. As each name was read off, a parcel was thrown over to the expectant Tommy. My heart was beating with eagerness as the Sergeant picked up each parcel: then a pang of disappointment as the name was read off.

"Each of the others received from one to four parcels. There were none left. I could feel their eyes sympathizing with me.

"Sailor Bill whispered something to the Sergeant that I could not get. The Sergeant turned to me and said:

" 'Why, blime me, Yank, I must be goin' balmy. I left your parcel up in the trench. I 'll be right back.'

"He returned in a few minutes with a large parcel addressed to me. I eagerly took the parcel and looked for the postmark. It was from London. Another pang of disappointment passed through me. I knew no one in London. My mail had to come from America.

"Then it all flashed over me in an instant. About two weeks before I had noticed a collection being taken up in the section and at the time thought it very strange that I was not asked to donate. The boys had all chipped in to make sure that I would not be forgotten on Christmas. They eagerly crowded around me as I opened the parcel. It contained nearly everything under the sun, including some American cigarettes.

"Tears of gratitude came to my eyes, but some way or other I managed not to betray myself. Those Tommies certainly were tickled at my exclamations of delight as I removed each article. Out of the corner of my eye I could see them nudging each other.

"A man named Smith in our section had been detailed as runner to our Captain and was not present at the distribution of the mail. Three parcels and five letters were placed on his pack so he would receive them on his return to the dugout.

"In about ten minutes a man came from the

trench loaded down with small oblong boxes. Each Tommy, including myself, received one. They were presents from the Queen of England, and each box contained a small plum pudding, cigarettes, a couple of cigars, matches and chocolate. Every soldier of the British Army in the trenches received one of these boxes on Christmas Day, as most of you know.

"At last Sailor Bill announced that Christmas dinner was ready and we each lost no time in getting to our respective packs, sitting around in a circle. Smith was the only absentee, and his parcels and letters, still unopened, were on his pack. He was now a half hour overdue.

"Sailor Bill, noting our eagerness to begin, held up his hand and said:

" 'Now boys, we 're all shipmates together, Don't you think it would be better to wait a few minutes more for Smith?"

"We all assented, but, soldier-like, cussed him for his delay.

"Ten minutes passed—fifteen—then twenty.

All eyes were turned in Sailor Bill's direction. He answered our looks with: 'Go to it, boys, we can't wait for Smith. I don't know what 's keeping him, but you know his name is in orders for leave and perhaps he is so tickled that he 's going to see his wife and three little nippers in Blighty, that he 's lost his bearings and has run aground.'

"We started in, and waxed merry for a few minutes. Then there 'd be an uncomfortable pause and all eyes would turn in the direction of the vacant place. Uneasiness prevailed.

"Suddenly, the entrance to the dugout was darkened and a form came stumbling down. With one accord we all shouted:

" 'Come on, Smith, you 're missing one of the best Christmas dinners of your life."

"Our Sergeant entered the dugout. One look at his face was enough. We knew he was the bearer of ill tidings.

"With tears in his eyes and a catch in his voice, he asked:

" 'Which is Smith's pack?'

"We all solemnly nodded our heads in the direction of the vacant place. Without a word the Sergeant picked up the letters, parcels and pack and started to leave the dugout.

"Sailor Bill could stand it no longer, and just as the Sergeant was about to leave he asked:

" 'Out with it, Sergeant, what 's happened?'

"The Sergeant turned around, and, in a choking voice, said:

" 'Boys, Smith 's gone West. Some bloody German sniper got him through the napper as he was passing that bashed-in part in Yiddish Street.'

"Sailor Bill ejaculated:

" 'Poor old Smith, gone West.' Then he paused and sobbed out: 'My God, think of his wife and three little nippers waiting in Blighty for him to come home for the Christmas holidays.'

"I believe that right at that moment a solid vow of vengeance registered itself in every heart around that festive circle.

"The next day we buried poor Smith in a

little cemetery behind the lines. While standing around his grave our artillery suddenly opened up with an intense bombardment on the German lines, and as every shell passed, screaming overhead, we sent a prayer of vengeance with it.

"As the grave was filled in, I imagined a huge rainbow embracing the graves in that cemetery on which, in letters of fire, was written, sarcastically in German, 'Peace on Earth, Good Will Toward Men.' But such is war.

"So, boys, that was my last Christmas. Where I 'll be next Christmas, God only knows.

"Next day my mail came in from America, and did n't cheer me much because I was thinking of Smith's wife and nippers.

"So long, boys, I 've got to go."

A SIREN OF THE BOCHES

As Told by Yank from a Personal Experience Related to Him by a Soldier Named Atwell

A SIREN OF THE BOCHES

THE British Lion was roaring and his growls could be heard all along the Western Front. Many German Generals were stirring uneasily in their large and sumptuously furnished concrete, shell-proof dugouts, kilos behind the German front line trenches, as the ever increasing thundering roar reached their ears. Way down in their hearts there was an unknown dread, perhaps a weakening of faith in the all powerful might of their 'Me und Gott.'

"We had a close-up view of the King of Beasts, in his majestic might, as he crouched ready for a spring, his tail furiously and impatiently thumping the ground. In a way he was a sorry-looking specimen; patches of hide were missing, revealing wounds, some of which

had entirely healed, while others were still freshly bleeding, exposing the raw flesh. If these scars had been labelled it would have been easy to read, 'Lusitania,' 'Hospital Ships Torpedoed,' 'Zeppelin Murders,' 'Poison Gas,' 'Liquid Fire.' The memory and pain of these atrocities increased his impatience to spring, whetted his appetite to rend and tear.

"The British bombardment of the German Lines was on, a bombardment which lasted for eight days and nights. At night the sky was a red glare, as if the world were on fire. Scarlet tongues of flame would suddenly shoot up from the German lines and as suddenly die out, only to be replaced by countless others as thousands of British shells burst in the air or buried themselves in the ground searching out the German Rats in their holes.

"Continuous flashes from the British rear paid tribute to the artillerymen, stripped to the waist, sweating and scorched by the breath of their guns, as they fed shells to the iron monsters. Overhead a rushing noise like the pass-

ing of an express train, or a moaning sigh through the air meant that the steel messengers of death and vengeance were on their way, on their way to give the Germans a taste of the Hell that they had prepared for others. The earth seemed to heave and crack as if some huge giant had been buried alive and was struggling for the air. This bombardment was the forerunner of the 'Battle of the Somme.'

"Atwell and I were alone in the machine gunners' dugout of the support trench, the gun's crew being on duty, in the fire trench. Atwell, a great big lovable fellow, was my mate. We had both been detailed to the Military Police of the Divisional Intelligence Department and were engaged upon 'spy work.' Atwell, although of a naturally cheery disposition, occasionally lapsed into fits of despondency.

"By the light from the stump of candle I was making out my previous day's report to turn in to Brigade Headquarters. At intervals the entrance to the dugout would light up red as a

shell burst; the candle would flicker and almost go out from the pressure of the air. My mate was sitting on his pack, his back leaning against the dank and muddy wall of the dugout. Finishing my report, I got out a fag, lighted it, and with an anxious, lonely feeling hearkened to the roar of the hell outside. A long drawn sigh caused me to look in Atwell's direction. The rays from the candle lighted up his face, the rest of his body being in semi-darkness. Never before in my life had I seen such a dejected and woebegone countenance. This, in a way, angered me, because I, myself, right then had a feeling of impending disaster, a sort of dread, intermingled with a longing for the faraway fields and flowers in Blighty. I wanted to be cheered, expected it, but Atwell's face looked like a morgue.

"Forcing a smile, which, in comparison no doubt made a graveyard look like a musical comedy, I leaned over, slapped him on the knee and said:

"'Come out of your trance and cheer up. We've both got a damn good chance for Blighty with this bombardment on.'

"Atwell looked in my direction, and in a tone which I had never heard before from him, answered:

"'I've been out here since '14. I've buried many a mate'—(this to me was very cheering)—'and I've seen many a lucky bloke on a stretcher bound for Blighty, and many an unlucky one on a stretcher bound for a hole in the ground, and never gave it a thought, but right now I feel that my stay in the trenches is short.'

"I butted in with, 'Cheero, mate, we all get downhearted at times. You are going to march into Berlin with the rest of us.'

"'March into Hell!' Atwell answered. 'I tell you that I am going to click it, I can feel it coming. Whether it's Blighty or a wooden cross, remains to be seen. I've had something on my mind since September, 1914, and it's been worrying me pink. I'm going to tell you

the story and I 'll give you my oath that you 're the first one that ever heard it from my lips. I 've got to get it out of my system.'

"Just then came a whizzing through the air. We both instinctively turned our eyes towards the entrance of the dugout and waited for the burst. Nothing happened.

" 'Another bloomin' dud,' ejaculated Atwell. 'A few more German marks gone to seed.' Then again the gloomy look spread over his countenance. I was getting nervous and uneasy. Fritz was dropping his shells too near for comfort. Trying to hide my fear, I said:

" 'For th' love o' Blighty, Atwell, crack a smile. Give us that story of yours, or else I 'll go balmy. You'd better get it off your chest, because Fritz is replying to our strafing, and if an eight-inch shell ever hits this dugout they 'll need no wooden crosses for us. Our names will appear on the Roll of Honour, under the caption "Missing." '

"With another sigh escaping from his lips, which sent a cold shiver up and down my spinal

column, he lighted a fag and started in. This is what he told me:

" 'It was back in September, 1914. You know I came out with the First Expeditionary Force, the time when all the fighting was being done in the open. The Germans were smashing everything before them in their drive to Paris. Our Brigade was one of the few opposed to Von Kluck. It was a case of hold them for a few hours and then retreat,—always retreat,—with the German tide lapping our heels. We did n't even have time to bury our dead. The grub was rotten, and we were just about fagged out, dead tired, with no prospect of relief or rest in front of us, and Hell behind.

" 'It was customary for small patrols of ten to twenty men, under a Sergeant, to reconnoitre on our flanks. One day I was sent out in command of one of these parties. Oh, yes, I was a Sergeant then, but I lost my stripes,—no, I was n't busted,—just resigned of my own accord. I was in for a commission, too, but of course I let it go with the Sergeant's stripes.

Guess I was lucky at that, because if I had received it, no doubt by this time I 'd be pushing up the daisies somewhere in France. In those days, you know, officers did n't last long,—made fine targets for the Boches.

" 'The patrol I was in command of carried rations for three days. We had orders to scout around on our left flank, keeping in touch with the advancing Germans, but not to engage them,—just get information. If the information was valuable, I was to send it in by one of the men. There were fourteen of us, and we were mounted. I was in the Lancers then, and was considered a fair rider,—got transferred to this outfit after I resigned from Sergeant,—guess they smelled a rat.

" 'The first day nothing happened. We just scouted around. By nightfall we were pretty tired, so when we came to a village,—was n't a village either; just five or six houses clustered around a church,—I decided to go into billets for the night.

" 'Riding up to the largest house, which had

a stone wall running around its garden, I dismounted at the gate and knocked at the front door—the house was on a sort of knoll. Then the sweetest voice I ever heard called out in trembling tones, in perfect English, too, with just the suspicion of an accent:

" ' "Who is there, please?"

" 'I answered: "Just a few English Lancers who desire a place to rest for the night. The barn will do. We don't want anything to eat, as we have rations with us. So, if you will accommodate us, miss, I will be much obliged." I was in love with that girl before I saw her—the voice had done the trick. She answered: "Just a moment, please, until I ask father." And then the door shut and the light disappeared. We did n't have to wait long before the door reopened, and she called to me: "Father bids you welcome, and so do I, soldiers of England!"

" 'We could hear her dainty steps approaching. Then she opened the gate. There she stood on the gravel path with the lantern held

shoulder high. I trembled all over—thought I saw a vision. I tell you, mate, she was beautiful. One of the kind you would like to take in your arms, but would n't for fear of crushing. No use for me to try to describe her, it 's out of my line; but she captured me heart and soul. There I stood like a great, big boob, shaking and stuttering. At last I managed to blurt out a stammering, "Thank you, miss."

" 'She showed us the way to the stables, and stood in the door holding the lantern so we could see to unsaddle. I was fumbling around with the buckles, but for the life of me I could n't get that saddle off. One of the men, with a wink and a broad grin, came over and helped me. That grin got my goat, so on the sly I kicked him on the shin. He let out an explosive "damn." After that the silence was painful, only broken by our horses impatiently champing their bits. The poor fellow felt like a fool, and I felt worse. I could have killed him for his thoughtlessness. But our embarrassment was short-lived. A silvery laugh

came from behind the lantern, a laugh that was not loud, but that echoed and reëchoed among the rafters overhead,—even the horses stopped to listen. I can hear it right now, Yank.

" 'After the horses had been unsaddled and fed, the men looked appealingly at me. I knew what they wanted—they were dog-tired, and dying to hit the hay. Just as I was about to ask permission for them to turn in, the angel butted in with:

" " "Poor, tired soldiers, sleepy and hungry. Come right into the house. Father has some supper and wine ready for you."

" 'We stammered our thanks and followed her into the house like a string of sheep, I in the lead. To me that meal was a dream. She flitted around the table, filling a glass here and there, laughing with us, and making us feel at home. The war was forgotten. By this time I was madly in love with her, and she knew it, for when she leaned over my shoulder to replenish my glass with red wine, her hair would brush my cheek, and once she rested her hand

on my shoulder and gave it just the slightest squeeze. I was in heaven.

" 'It was getting late, and the wine was beginning to tell on the men. They were falling asleep in their chairs. I had a hard job waking four of them to go on guard. They got their rifles and were standing around me for instructions, when our hostess came over to me, and, resting her hand on my arm, with again the slightest of squeezes and pleading eyes, interceded for them.

" ' "Sergeant," she said, "let the poor boys sleep. They are so tired. There is no danger. The Germans are miles away. I know this to be true. Do this for me." And again that squeeze.

" 'I, like a fool, listened to her, and gave an unwilling assent. The men looked their gratitude. Jean, an old manservant, led them out to the barn, where an abundance of hay had been spread for their beds. I was following when a whisper in my ear made my head swim:

" ' "Don't go yet, my Sergeant, stay with me."

" 'I stayed, worse luck.

" 'We sat on a settee, talking, and her arm stole around my waist. I was n't slow, either, and as you know, mate, I have a pretty good reach. Once she spoke to me in French, but I shook my head in bewilderment. In a few minutes the servant returned, and Adrienne—she told me her name—called him to her, and said, "Jean, go down into the wine cellar and get some of that old port and give it to the soldiers of England. Poor boys, it will warm them." She added something in French I could not understand, then she said: "Leave a bottle here for the Sergeant and me."

" 'I protested against more wine for the boys. Her pleading overruled my good judgment, and I consented. The servant left to do her mission, and I proposed. Her answer was a kiss. I was the happiest man in France.

" 'Presently Jean returned with a basketful

of bottles, and placing one, which had the cork removed, on the table, he silently withdrew in the direction of the stable.

" 'Adrienne poured out a glass of wine and offered it to me, but as my head was already beginning to buzz, I refused it. With a shrug of the shoulders and a peculiar sort of smile, which made me feel ashamed of my rudeness, she said: "Perhaps my Sergeant will refuse to kiss me."

" 'This came as a jolt to me, because our English girls are not so free in asking for kisses. I fancy something in my face betrayed my feelings in the matter, for she came right back at me: "I see the English sergeant does not understand the customs of France,—" And she puckered up her lips and I kissed her.

" 'Well, mate, as is usual under the circumstances, we talked, or at least I did. She did most of the listening. That wine sure untied my tongue; another drink or two and I would have promised her Buckingham Palace. I

was just fool crazy in love with her. Once I caught her stifling a yawn when I was in the midst of one of my verbal barrages, but the pretty smile which quickly followed once again had me in a fool's paradise.

" 'My back was to the door leading to the stables. Suddenly it opened. I sprang for my rifle which I had left leaning against the table close at hand. It was n't there. I faced around and there in the door stood Lance Corporal Hawkins. A pretty looking sight he was, with hay in his hair, cap gone, and no rifle. One look at his eyes was enough. They were red rimmed and watery. The fool was drunk, I could see that at a glance, but he seemed to be fighting it off; he wabbled on his pins, blinked his eyes, and rubbed his forehead with his hand as if bewildered.

" 'Angry at being disturbed, I yelled at him, "Well, what do you want? What 's the matter?"

" 'This seemed to sober him momentarily, because he blurted out in a thick voice, " 'Scuse

me, Sergeant, but—hic,—back in Blighty,—I could drink 'em all under the table, 'ad the name for a-doin' it in the pubs. Was champeen of 'em all—an' I know this blinkin' red ink I been a drinkin' ain't made me drunk—hic—it 's mighty damned queer" (a hard look from me) "excuse me, Miss, but my 'ead 's like a buzz saw."

"'I was getting madder and madder. Adrienne seemed to be getting fidgety. She was looking around nervously. I could stand it no longer, so I let out on Hawkins.

"' "You get back to that stable, you drunk, you 're a disgrace to that uniform; I 'll attend to you in the morning. You 're under arrest." Hawkins did n't move and after a strong effort started talking, more to himself than to me,—he seemed in a daze.

"' "Sergeant, I—there 's a horse—there 's a horse, it 's missing—the rifles are gone—can't find a nary one—only thirteen horses—one from fourteen 's thirteen—had fourteen—one from thirteen 's fourteen—"

" 'I looked for my rifle. Adrienne smiled at me and reassuringly pointed to the far corner of the room. There was my rifle. But how did it get there? I was getting alarmed and uneasy. Noting this, Adrienne with her sweetest smile said,—

" ' "I see my Sergeant is not used to our French wine; it plays many tricks on the mind." And she glanced significantly at Hawkins.

" 'Hawkins, giving me a wondering look, mumbled, "Sergeant 's got same kind of drunk —hic—I got—rifles walk—hic—horses fly."

" 'Adrienne gave me a look of disdain which decided me. Turning to Hawkins, I ordered,—

" ' "You get back to that stable, quick; not another word from you. I tell you, you are drunk."

" 'Hawkins gave me a sarcastic salute and muttered loud enough for me to hear, "Sergeant has more brains than Lance Corporal—or would n't be sergeant—don't know there 's

a war on—thinks this is a blinkin' peace time maneuver—ter 'ell with the bloody horses—a bloomin' rifle 's only extra weight." Then he turned around and stumbled out of the door.

" 'I was mad to the core. Still I was uneasy about Hawkins's report concerning the rifles and horses and intended immediately to investigate.

" 'Adrienne came over to me and, putting a hand on each of my shoulders, looked up into my eyes and said, "My sergeant has taken too much wine. I am sorry. I thought he was strong and could laugh at such trifles, but I see I was mistaken."

" 'This sent me up in the air completely. I would show her. Removing her hands from my shoulders, I reached for the glass of wine. She gently took it from me and, just touching the edge of the glass to her pretty lips, passed it back and said in a voice of silver, "Drink, my Sergeant, drink to our betrothal. Drink to the honour of France. Drink to the honour

of England. Drink to the confusion of our enemies."

"'I drank with my fool heart pounding against my ribs.

"'She started to fade into a mist,—she was laughing—there were three Adriennes—why was the table floating in the air—the horses—the rifles—we had been betrayed—crash—bang—a shell hit the house. Then blackness.

"'When I awoke, I was lying on the floor. My head seemed to be bursting with pain. The gray dawn was filtering through the curtained windows, and there in the middle of the room, with my Adrienne in his arms, stood a captain of Uhlans. I was a prisoner. I saw it all in a flash. She had betrayed me. Now I knew why she had wanted no guard posted,—why the horse was missing, the rifles gone. The wine we pledged our troth in was drugged. What an ass I had been! Hawkins was right.

"'I closed my eyes and pretended to be asleep. They were talking in German.

Pretty soon the captain came over and roughly shook me. I only grunted. With an exclamation of disgust, he called out in German. Two troopers came in, and, lifting me by the shoulders and feet, carried me out into the air. I slightly opened my eyes, and saw that I had been carried out to the gate, where two horses were standing with their reins thrown over a hitching post. By the equipment I knew one of the horses belonged to the captain, while the other was the orderly's. The two troopers dumped me down on the road, one giving me a kick with his boot. I was lying on my left side, and by a certain hard pressure on my ribs, I knew they had neglected to search me. That pressure was my automatic pistol. A feeling of exultation rushed over me. I had a fighting chance.

" 'Fate worked into my hands. A hail in German came from the stables, and one of the troopers left to answer it. The odds were even, one against one. I slowly turned over on my face, as if in sleep, and my fingers

grasped the butt of the automatic. But just then I heard steps on the gravel walk. The captain and Adrienne were coming toward me. She stopped beside me, and said in English: "You poor English fool! Make love to me, will you? Good-bye, my idiotic sergeant. While you are rotting in prison, think of your Adrienne, bah!"

" 'My hand gave the butt of my automatic just the slightest squeeze. I was thinking of her hand on my shoulder. Well, two could play that game.

" 'The captain said something to the orderly, who left in the direction of the house. Now was my chance. Springing to my feet and leveling the pistol at the captain, I grabbed the reins of his horse from the post and mounted. The orderly came running toward me, yelling out in German, and I could see Uhlans emerging from the stable. I had to work quickly.

" 'When I mounted, the captain reached for his revolver. I covered him with mine. With a shriek of terror, Adrienne threw herself on

his breast to protect him. I saw her too late. My bullet pierced her left breast, and a red smudge showed on her white silk blouse as she sank to the ground. I shot the orderly's horse to prevent immediate pursuit. Then I set off at a mad gallop down the road. It was a long chase, but I escaped them.

"'So that is my story, Yank. Just forget that I ever told it to you. Enough to make a fellow get the blues occasionally, is n't it? Just pass me a fag, and take that look off your face.'

"I gave him the cigarette, and, without a word, went out of the dugout, and left him alone. I was thinking of Adrienne. Upon reaching the trench I paused in wonder and fright. The sky was alight with a red glare. The din was terrific. A constant swishing and rushing through the air, intermingled with a sighing moan, gave testimony that our batteries were sweating blood. The trench seemed to be rolling like a ship. I stood in awe. This bombardment of ours was something inde-

scribable, and a shudder passed through me as I thought of the havoc and destruction caused n the German lines. At that moment I really pitied the Germans, but not for long; suddenly hell seemed to burst loose from the German ines as their artillery opened up. I could hear their 5.9's screeching through the air and bursting in the artillery lines in our rear. Occasionally a far off rum-rum-rump-rump-Crash! Bru-u-un-nn-ng-g! could be heard as ne of their high calibered shells came over and urst in our reserve. I crouched against the arados, hardly able to breathe. While in his position, right overhead, every instant getng louder, came a German shell—whi-z-z! ang-g-g! I was blinded by the flash. Down went, into the mud. Struggling to my feet the red glare of the bombardment, I saw hat the traverse on my left had entirely disppeared. Covered with mud, weak and embling, I staggered to my feet, and again sted against the parados, trembling with fear. could hear what sounded like far distant

voices coming from the direction of the bashed-in traverse.

" 'Blime me, get 'is bloomin' napper out a th' mud; 'e 's chokin' to death. Pass me a bandage—tyke 'is b'yonet fer a splint. Blime me, 'is leg is smashed, not 'arf h'it h'ain't. Th' rest o' you blokes 'op it fer a stretcher. 'Ello, 'e 's got another one—quick, a tourniquet, the poor bloke 's a-bleedin' to death. Quick, h'up against the parapet, 'ere comes another.'

"Whiz-z-z! Bang-g-g!

"Another flare, and once again I was thrown into the mud. I opened my eyes. Bending over me, shaking me by the shoulder and yelling into my ear, was Atwell. His voice sounded faint and far away. Then I came to with a rush.

" 'Blime me, Yank, that was a close one. Did it get you?'

"He helped me to my feet and I felt myself all over. Seeing I was all right, he yelled into my ear:

" 'We 've got to leg it out of 'ere. Fritz is

sure sendin' over whizz-bangs and Minnies. Number 9 platoon in the next firebay sure clicked it. About eighteen of them have gone West. Come on, we 'll see if we can do anything for the poor blokes.'

"We plowed through the mud and came into the next firebay. In the light of the bursting shells an awful sight met our eyes. The traverses were bashed in, the firestep was gone, and in the parados was a hole that looked like a subway entrance. There was mud and blood all around. An officer of the Royal Army Medical Corps and several stretcher-bearers were working like Trojans. We offered our aid, which was gladly accepted.

"Every now and then ducking as a whizz-bang or Minnie came over, we managed to get four of the wounded on the stretchers, and Atwell and I carried one to the rear to the First Aid Dressing Station. We passed the dugout which I had left a few minutes before, or, at least, what used to be the dugout, but now all that could be seen was a caved-in mass

of dirt; huge, square-cut timbers sticking out of the ground and silhouetted against the light from bursting shells. A shudder passed through me as I realized that if we had stayed in the dugout we would have now been lying fifteen to twenty feet down, covered by that caved-in earth and wreckage.

"Atwell jerked his head in the direction of the smashed-in dugout and, as was his wont, remarked: 'How about that fancy report you were writing out a few minutes ago? Did n't I tell you that it never paid to make out reports in the front line? It 's best to wait until you get to Headquarters, because what 's the use of wasting all that bally time when you 're liable to be buried in a dugout?'

"Turning my head to listen to Atwell, I ran plump into a turn in the trench. A shout came from the form on the stretcher we were carrying: 'Why in the bloody 'ell don't you blokes look where you 're a-goin'? You 'd think this was a bloomin' Picadilly bus, and I was out with my best girl on a joy-ride.' I

mumbled my apologies and the form relapsed into silence. Then the muddy Tommy on the stretcher began to mumble. Atwell asked him if he wanted anything. With a howl of rage, he answered: 'Of all the bloody nerve,—do I want anything? No, I don't want anything —only a bloody pair o' crutches, a dish of "fish and chips" and a glawss of stout.'

"When we came to the First Aid Dressing Station we turned our charge over to some R. A. M. C." (Royal Army Medical Corps) "men, and, ducking and running through the communication trench, we at last reached one of the roomy 'Elephant Dugouts.' We were safe. Stumbling over the feet of men, we came to an unoccupied corner and sat down in the straw. Several candles were burning. Grouped around these candles were a lot of Tommies, their faces pale and with a frightened look in their eyes. Strange to say, the conversation had nothing to do with themselves. They were sympathizing with the poor fellows in the front line who were clicking it.

"I must have dropped off to sleep. When I awoke it was morning, and after drinking our tea and eating our bread and bacon, Atwell and I reported to Brigade Headquarters, and again returned to the front line trench."

WINNING A D. C. M.

As Told by Ikey

WINNING A D. C. M.

THE gun's crew were sitting on the straw in the corner of the billet, apart from the rest of the section. The night before they had been relieved from the fire trench, and were "resting" in rest billets. Their "day's rest" had been occupied in digging a bombing trench, which was to be used for the purpose of breaking in would-be bombers.

Hungry was slicing away at a huge loaf of bread, while on his knee he was balancing a piece of "issue" cheese. His jack-knife was pretty dull and the bread was hard, so every now and then he paused in his cutting operation to take a large bite from the cheese.

Curly whispered to Yank: "Three bob to a tanner, Yank, that he eats the cheese before he finishes slicing that 'rooty.' "

Yank whispered back: "Nothing doing,

Curly, you are Scotch, and did you ever see a Scotchman bet on anything unless it was a sure winner?"

He answered in an undertone: "Well, let 's make it a pack of fags. How about it, Yank?"

"That 's a bet," replied Yank.

(Curly won the fags.)

Sailor Bill was sitting next to Curly, and had his dog, Jim, (named after his former pet dog, Private Jim)—a scroggly-looking cur,—between his knees, and was picking hard pieces of mud from its paws. Jim was wagging his stump of a tail and was intently watching Hungry's operation on the bread. Every time Hungry reached for the cheese, Jim followed the movement with his eyes, and his tail wagged faster. Hungry, noting this look, bit off a small piece of the cheese and flipped it in Jim's direction. Jim deftly caught it in his mouth, and then the fun began. Jim hated cheese. It was amusing to watch him spit it out and sneeze.

Ikey reached over, took the candle, and

started searching in his pack, amid a chorus of growls from the rest at his rudeness in thus depriving them of light. Yank was watching him closely and suspected what was coming. Sure enough, out came that harmonica and Yank knew it was up to him to start the ball of conversation rolling before Ikey began to play; for after he had once started nothing short of a German "five nine" shell-burst would stop him. Yank slyly kicked Sailor Bill, who immediately got wise, and then Yank broke the ice:

"Sailor, I heard you say this afternoon, while we were digging that trench, that in your opinion darn few medals were really won: that it was more or less an accident or luck. Now, just because your D. C. M. came up with the rations, and, as you say, was wished on you, there is no reason in my mind to class every winner of a medal as 'accidentally lucky.'"

This medal business was a sore point with Sailor Bill, and he came right back:

"Well, if any of you lubbers can tell me where a D. C. M. truly came aboard in a ship-shape manner; that is, up the after gang-plank, and piped over the side, then h'I will strike my colors and lay up on a lee shore for a keel 'auling."

Ikey had just taken a long, indrawn breath, and his cheeks were puffed out like a balloon, preparatory to blowing it into the harmonica which he had at his lips. But he paused, and, removing the musical instrument of torture, exploded:

"Blime me, I know a bloke who won a D. C. M., and it was n't accidental or lucky, either. I was right out in front with him. Blime me, I sure had the wind-up, but with French it was 'Business as usual.' He just carried on."

The rest chirped in, "Come on, Ikey, let 's have the story."

"I will if you 'll just let me play this one tune first," answered Ikey.

He started in and was accompanied by a dismal, moaning howl from Jim. Ikey had

been playing about a minute, when the Orderly Sergeant poked his head in the door of the billet, and said:

"The Captain says to stop that infernal noise."

Highly insulted, Ikey stopped playing and said, "Some people 'ave no idea of music." The gun's crew unanimously agreed with him.

Somewhat mollified, he started:

"Corporal French is the same bloke who just returned from Blighty and joined the 3rd Section yesterday.

"We were 'oldin' a part o' the line up Fromelles w'y, and were about two 'undred yards from the Germans. This sure was a 'ot section o' the line, h'against the Prussians, an' it was a case, at night, o' keeping your ears an' eyes open. No Man's Land was full o' their patrols and ours, an' many fights took place between them.

"One night we would send over a trench-raiding party, an' the next night over would come Fritz.

"There was a certain part o' our trench nicknamed 'Death Alley' an' the company which held it were sure to 'click' it hard in casualties.

"John French—'e was a Lance Corporal then—was in charge o' our section. This was before I went to Machine Gunners' School an' transferred to this outfit. This French certainly was an artist when it came to scoutin' in No Man's Land. 'E knew every inch o' the ground h'out in front, an' was like a cat—'e could see in the dark.

"On the night that 'e won his D. C. M., 'e 'ad been out in front with a patrol for two hours, an' had just returned to the fire trench. A sentry down on the right o' Death Alley reported a suspicious noise out in front, an' our Captain gave orders for another patrol to go out an' investigate.

"Corporal Hastings was next on the list for the job, but, blime me, 'e sure 'ad the wind-up, an' was shakin' and tremblin' like a dish o' jelly.

"A new Leftenant, Williams by name, 'ad just come out from Blighty, an' a pretty fine officer, too. Now, don't you chaps think because this chap was killed that I say he was a good officer, because, dead or alive, you would 'ave to go a bloomin' long way to get another man like Williams. But, this young Leftenant was all eagerness to get out in front. You see, it was 'is first time over the top. 'E noticed that Hastings was a bit shaky, an' so did French. French went up to the officer an' said:

" 'Sir, Corporal Hastings 'as been feeling queer (sick) for the last couple of days, an' I certainly would deem it a favor if I could go in 'is place.'

"Now, don't think that Hastings was a coward, because 'e was not. The best of us are liable to get the 'shakes' at times. You know, Hastings was killed at La Bassée a few months ago,—killed while goin' over the top.

"There were seven in this patrol,—Leftenant

Williams, Corporal French, myself an' four more from B Company.

"About sixty yards from Fritz's trench an old ditch—must have been the bed of a creek, but at that time it was dry—ran parallel with the German barbed wire. Linin' the edge of this ditch was a scrubby sort o' hedge which made a fine hidin'-place for a patrol. Why Fritz had not sent out a workin' party an' done away with this screen was a mystery to us. French leadin', followed by Leftenant Williams, myself third, an' the rest trailin' behind, the patrol crawled through a gap under our barbed wire leadin' out to a listenin'-post in No Man's Land. Williams carried a revolver —one of those Yankee Colts,—and his cane. Blime me, I believe that officer slept with that cane. He never went without it. The rest of us were armed with bombs and rifles, bayonets fixed. We had previously blackened our bayonets so they would not shine in the glare of a star-shell. Reachin' the listenin'-post, French, under orders from Williams, told us to

wait about five minutes until he returned from a little scoutin' trip on his own. When he left, we, with every nerve tense, listened for his comin' back. We could almost 'ear h'each h'other's 'eart pumpin', but not a sound around the listenin'-post. Suddenly, a voice, about six feet on my right, whispered, 'All right, the way is clear; follow me an' carry on.' My blood froze in my veins. It was uncanny the way French approached us without being heard.

"Then, with backs bendin' low, out of the listenin'-post we went, in the direction of the ditch in front of the German barbed wire. We reached the scrubby hedge and lay down, about six feet apart, to listen. French an' the officers were on the right of our lines.

"About twenty minutes 'ad elapsed, when suddenly, directly in front of the German wire, we could see dark, shadowy forms rise from the ground and move along the wire. Silhouetted against the skyline these forms looked like huge giants and took on horrible shapes.

My 'eart almost stopped beating. Sixty-two I 'ad counted as the last form faded into the blackness on my left. A whisper came to my ear: 'Don't move or make a sound; a strong German raidin' party is going across.' It was French's voice. I did not hear him approach me, nor leave—Yank, he must have got his trainin' with the Indians on your Great Plains along the Hudson River." (Yank snickered, but it was unnoticed by Ikey.) "I could hear a slight scrapin' noise on my right and left. Pretty soon the whole reconnoiterin' patrol was laying in a circle, heads in. French had, in his noiseless way, given orders for them to close in on me, and await instructions.

"Leftenant Williams' voice, in a very low whisper, came to us: 'Boys, the men, in our trenches 'ave received orders not to fire on account of our reconnoiterin' patrol bein' out in front. A strong German raidin' party has just circled our left, an' is makin' for our trench. It 's up to us to send word back. We can't all go, because we might make too much

noise and warn the German party, so it 's up to one of us to carry the news back to the trench that the raidin' party is on its way. With this information it will be quite easy for our boys to wipe them out. But it 's up to the rest of us to stick out here, and if we go West on account of the fire from our trench, well, we have done our duty in a noble cause. Corporal French, you had better take the news back, because you are too valuable a man to sacrifice.'

"French, under his breath, answered: 'Sir, I 've been out since Mons, and this is the first time that I 've ever been insulted by an officer. If this patrol is going to click it, I 'm goin' to click it too. If we come out of this you can try me for disobedience of orders, but here I stick, an' I 'll be damned if I go in, officer or no officer.'

"Williams, in a voice husky with emotion, answered:

" 'French, it 's men like you that make it possible for our little Island to withstand the

world. You are a true Briton, an' I 'm proud of you.'

"I was hopin' that he would detail me to go back, but he did n't. Henderson was picked for the job. When Henderson left, Williams shook hands all around. I felt wet all over.

"You see, fellows, it was this way: Henderson was to tell the men in the trench that we had returned an' that it was all right for them to turn loose on the raidin' party with their rifle and machine-gun fire, without us clicking their fire. It was a damned big lie, but it would save the blokes in our trench from a bloody bashing. That Leftenant Williams sure was a lad, not 'arf he were n't.

"The next twenty minutes of waiting was Hell. Our man must have got in safe, because from out of the blackness, over towards our trench, rang that old familiar ' 'Alt! who goes there?' I recognized Corporal Johnson's voice as doing the challengin' and I said to myself, 'You lucky bloke, Johnson, in a trench, an' me out here to click it.' We hugged the

ground because we knew what was comin'. Then, a volley from our trench, and four 'type-writers' (machine-guns) turned loose. Bullets cracked right over our head. One hit the ground about a foot from me, ricocheted, and went moanin' and sighin' over the German lines.

"Leftenant Williams sobbed under his breath:

" 'God, we 're in direct line of our own fire. The trench-raidin' party must have circled us.'

"Our boys in our trenches were sure doin' themselves proud. The bullets were crackin' an' bitin' the ground all around us. I wished I was safe in Blighty, or jail, it did n't matter.

"In between our trench an' our party, curses rang out in German as the Boches clicked the fire from the English trench. Star-shells were shootin' into the air an' droppin' in No Man's Land. It was a great, but terrible sight which met our eyes. Fritz's raidin' party was bein' wiped off like numbers on a kid's slate. Ten

or fifteen dark forms, the remnants of the German raidin' party, dashed past us in the direction of the German trench. We stuck close to the ground. It was our only chance. We knew that it would only be a few seconds before Fritz turned loose from his trench. We were caught, all right, you see. If we had legged it for our trench we would have been wiped out by our own fire. You see, our boys thought we were safely in, and would have mistaken us for Boches. Up went Fritz's star lights, and the clock jumped twelve hours, turnin' midnight into the blaze of moon, and Hell cut loose. Their bullets were snippin' twigs from the hedge over our heads.

"Suddenly, the fellow on my left, MacCauley by name, emitted a muffled groan and started kickin' the ground: then there was silence. He 'ad gone West. A bullet through the napper, I suppose. There were now five of us left. Suddenly Leftenant Williams, in a faint, choking voice, exclaimed:

" 'They 've got me, French, it 's through the lung'—and then fainter—'you 're in command. So that—' His voice died away.

"Pretty soon he started moaning loudly. The Germans must have heard these moans because they immediately turned their fire on us. French called to me:

" 'Ikey, come here, my lad, our officer has clicked it.'

"I crawled over to him. He was sittin' on the ground with the Leftenant's head restin' in his lap, and was gettin' out his first-aid packet. I told him to get low or he would click it. He answered:

" 'Since when does a bloomin' Lance Corporal take orders from a bloody private? You tell the rest of the boys, if there 's any of them left, to leg it back to our trench at the double and get a stretcher, and you go with them. This lad of ours has got to get medical attention, an' damned quick, too, if we want to stop his bleedin'.'

"Just then a German star-shell landed about

ten feet from us, an' in its white, ghostly light I could see French sittin' like a bloomin' statue, his hands covered with blood, tryin' to make a tourniquet out of a bandage an' his bayonet. I told the rest to get in an' get the stretcher. They needed no second urgin', an' soon French was left there alone, sittin' on the ground, holdin' his dyin' officer's head in his lap. A pretty picture, I call it. He sure was a man, was French; with the bullets crackin' overhead and kickin' up the dirt around him."

Just then Happy butted in with: "Were you one of the men who went in for the stretcher?"

Ikey answered: "None of your damned business. If you blokes want to hear this story through, don't interrupt."

Happy vouchsafed no answer.

"About ten minutes after the fellows left for the stretcher, French got a bullet through the left arm."

Sailor Bill interrupted here:

"How do you know it was ten minutes?"

Ikey blushed and answered:

"French told me when he got back to the trench. You see, he carried the officer back through that fire, because the stretcher-bearers took too long in coming out."

Yank asked Ikey how Corporal French, being wounded himself, could carry Leftenant Williams in, when he must have been a dead weight.

Ikey answered, "Well, you blokes give me the proper pip, and you can all bloomin' well go to hell," and he shut up like a clam.

Hungry got up and silently withdrew from the circle. In about ten minutes he returned, followed by a tall, fair-haired Corporal, who wore a little strip of gold braid on the left sleeve of his tunic, denoting that he had been once wounded, and also wore a little blue and red ribbon on the left breast of his tunic, the field insignia of the Distinguished Conduct Medal.

Hungry, in triumph, brought him into the circle an' handed him a fag, which he lighted

in the flame from the candle on the mess tin, an' then Hungry introduced him:

"Boys, I want you to meet Corporal French."

We shook hands all around.

Ikey got red an' was tryin' to ease out of the candle light, when Sailor Bill grabbed him by the tunic and held him.

Then Hungry carried on: "French, I 'm goin' to ask you a mighty personal question, and I know you 'll answer it. How in hell did you, hit in the left arm, bring Leftenant Williams back from that reconnoiterin' patrol?"

French got a little red, an' answered: "Well, you see, boys, it was this way. Ikey an' I stuck out there with him, an' taking the slings from our rifles, Ikey made a sort of a rope which he put around my shoulder an' under the arms of the Leftenant, an' Ikey gettin' the Leftenant by the legs, we managed to get him into the trench. You know, I got a D. C. M. out of the affair, because I was the Corporal in charge. Damned unfair, I call

it, for they only handed him the Military Medal. If the true facts were known he was the bloke who deserved the D. C. M."

They all turned in Ikey's direction. Sailor Bill, in his interest, had released his hold on Ikey's tunic and Ikey had disappeared.

Happy asked French if the Leftenant had died in No Man's Land. French, with tears in his eyes, answered: "No, but the poor lad went West after we got him to the first aid dressin' station, an' next day we buried him in the little cemetery at Fromelles. He sure done his bit, all right, blime me, and here I am, bloomin' well swankin' with a ribbon on my chest."

A dead silence fell on the crowd. Each one of them was admirin' the modesty of those two real men, French an' Ikey. But such is the way in the English Army,—the man who wins the medal always says that the other fellow deserved it. An' German Kultur is still wonderin' why it cannot smash through the English Lines.

THE FUSILIER GIANTS UNDER FIRE

As Told by Yank

THE FUSILIER GIANTS UNDER FIRE

"COME on, Yank, give us that baseball story you promised," pleaded Dick.

"All right. Here goes," answered Yank.

"We were sitting on the firestep. It was bright and sunny and we were bubbling over with good humor. There were two reasons for this: First, our Battalion was to be relieved at nine that night and we were going back for a two weeks' rest. Second, it was spring. We could smell it in the air. Even the wind blowing from the German trenches in our direction had a sweet and 'springy' smell.

"About thirty yards down a communication trench 'to the left' was an orchard. The trees were scarred from bullets and fragments of shell; but even these battered trunks could not

resist the feel of spring, for here and there on the twigs and branches could be seen bursting buds. Flitting around were numerous birds, chirping or sometimes wrangling among themselves.

"It seemed odd that birds could accustom themselves to war. Occasionally a German shell, or perhaps one of ours, would go screaming over the orchard. The birds did not seem to mind the noise,—just carried on with their nest building.

"In our company was another American, called 'Alex,'—his last name does n't matter. Naturally, we were very chummy. Alex and I were the chief 'Amusement Promoters' in the company, the Tommies constantly looking to us for some new diversion.

"You know you Tommies seem to have the idea that an American's chief vocation in the United States is to invent, and keep on inventing. Well, this bunch was just like the rest, had the same idea. Of course, Alex and I did not in any way try to dissipate their idea;

in fact we encouraged it, and took great pride in being looked up to in this way; but, believe me, it kept us hustling to keep them amused.

"It was getting too warm for soccer football, and we knew as soon as we got into rest billets that the issue would be put right up to us, 'How are you going to amuse us while we are behind the lines?'

"We were Americans, and red-blooded; spring was in the air, and our thoughts turned to what every American boy is thinking of upon the arrival of spring—baseball.

"I turned my eyes to the muddy parados of the trench, and fixed my gaze on a fragment of German shell imbedded in the mud. Pretty soon this fragment changed into a baseball player, with mask, protector and catcher's mitt. He was crouching behind the home-plate and signaling to the pitcher. Just then Alex said, 'Say, Yank, I wonder if we could teach the Tommies how to play baseball.'

"I immediately turned in his direction. He was also staring at that fragment of shell.

"I answered: 'Did you ever try to teach a Chinaman how to speak French?'

"He got it right away. A dejected look spread over his countenance, and he let out a long-drawn sigh.

"A Tommy sitting on my right butted in with: 'Did you sye byse-ball, Yank? Why, I saw a gyme in London. It 's absurdly easy to plye, but I cawn't sye I fawncy h'it.'

"With a look of disgust Alex turned to me and said, 'I guess you 're right, Yank, it would be easier to teach the Chinaman French!'

"That night we were relieved and went behind the lines.

"The next afternoon, after parade" (drill), "we were sitting in an orchard drinking tea. About a month before, Alex and I had taught the Tommies how to pitch horseshoes. There was great rivalry among the different squads, each squad having a team.

"Just then Corporal Watkins came over to us and asked, 'Where are the 'orse-shoes, I cawn't find 'em?'

"Another Tommy answered: 'Strafe me pink, where are your h'eyes? Cawn't you bloomin' well see the h'officers usin' 'em be'ind that billet over there? Blime me, they 're always a-gummin' the gyme.'

"Sure enough, the officers were using our horseshoes.

"Alex, with a look of determination, turned to me, and said, 'Well, here goes, Yank. Steve Brodie took a chance, so I might be able to get away with this.'

"Then, turning to the Tommies, he said, 'Did any of you blokes ever hear of John McGraw?'

"Three of the Tommies answered, 'Yes.'

"A sunny smile and a look of hope flitted across Alex's face, and he breathlessly asked, 'Who is he?'

"The three started to answer at once, but Alex majestically extending his hand, palm forward, said, 'Get in line, one at a time. Now, Perkins, who is John McGraw?'

"Perkins answered, 'Why, 'e 's a Lawnce Corporal in the Royal Irish Rifles.'

"According to Alex's look, that Tommy should have immediately dropped dead. Turning to the next, he said, 'Thwaites, for the Love o' Mike, who is he?'

"Thwaites, with a knowing look, answered, ''E runs the King's Arms Public 'ouse, down Rye Lane.'

"With a piteous look, Alex glanced in my direction and I jerked my thumb in the direction of the other Tommy, who seemed to be bursting with suppressed eagerness. Alex looking at him, ejaculated: 'Spit it out before you choke.'

"This fellow, with a superior air, turned in the direction of the two dejected Tommies, and answered, 'John McGraw, why everybody knows 'im; he was the fellow in the London Scottish who clicked crucifixion for stealing the rum issue at Wipers. 'E was a lad, not 'arf he were n't.'

"A hissing noise issued from Alex's lips, and he collapsed like a punctured toy balloon. After a few seconds he straightened up and

a look of determination came into his eyes. Addressing the Tommies, he exploded: 'You blokes are enough to make Billy Sunday take to drink. Now, listen here, and let it sink in deep. John McGraw is the manager of the New York Giants. He is a baseball player; get it? A baseball player. He 's a guy what manages a baseball team. And any fellows who can't make good on his team, or in the bush leagues, he sends 'em a cricket bat with their name inscribed on it and pays their passage to England. Get me?'

"Several Tommies took exception to this, and said that they had followed cricket all their lives, but had never heard of any American cricketers being sent over by Mr. McGraw. At this I exploded with laughter, and Alex went up in the air. Standing up and turning to the bunch under the trees, pointing his fingers in their direction, he let out:

" 'Now listen, this is good. I 'm going to send down to the Ordnance Corps and get a dozen gimlets and some funnels. With these

gimlets I 'm going to bore holes in your nappers, and using the funnel I 'm going to pour into those garrets of yours a little brains. Then, after you 've acquired gray matter, I 'm going to teach you the great American game of baseball; and then when through teaching you, I 'm going to retire to the Old Soldiers' Home as physically and mentally unfit, because I know the job will put me there.'

"The Tommies did not take exception to his pointed remarks about their lack of brains. They overlooked this because they were very eager to learn how to play baseball. A chorus of, 'Go to h'it, Yank, that 's what we want; something new out 'ere in this bloody mess of mud and "cooties." ' Alex said that we would have to talk the matter over, and beckoning to me, went in the direction of the billet. I followed. He then outlined his scheme.

"We were to form two baseball classes, Alex in charge of one, I of the other. On the plaster of the billet we carefully scratched out a baseball diamond, and then called the

Tommies in. They sat around like little children in a school, eagerly intent. For two hours we explained the game to them. When we got through they all knew how to play baseball—on paper. We dismissed them, telling them another class would be held the following afternoon. That night Alex and I, around the stump of a candle, went into details for organizing two teams. Everything appeared rosy, and we were highly jubilant. A Tommy eased over in our direction and innocently asked:

"'I sye, Yank, isn't it necessary to 'ave byse-balls and clubs? We cawn't very well plye without 'em.'

"This was a bomb-shell to us. In our eagerness and excitement we had quite forgotten that bats, balls and gloves were necessary. I thought Alex was going to burst. Letting out a 'Well, I 'll be blowed,' which nearly blew the candle out, he turned a silly look in my direction, and I looked just as cheap. At last the Tommies had stumped us, and we could

see our reputation fading into nothing. A dead silence reigned. Then Alex started to madly open his haversack. I thought he had suddenly gone crazy. I reached my hand in the direction of my bayonet, fearing that he was looking for a Mill's bomb. When he drew his hand out, hanging to his fist was a writing pad. I guiltily let go of my bayonet. Borrowing a pencil from me (Alex was always borrowing), he started writing. I thought perhaps he was going to commit suicide and was writing a farewell letter home, and asked him what was up. He whispered to me:

" 'Yank, we 're two bloody fools not to have thought of this long ago. All we 've got to do is to write home to one of the New York papers asking the readers to send out baseball stuff to us and it will only be a matter of a few weeks before we will have enough to equip two teams.'

"I offered to write the letter, and with Alex bending over me, I eagerly wrote an appeal to the readers of the New York *Evening Tele-*

gram, and turned the letter over to the Mail Orderly.

"We then explained to the Tommies that equipment was necessary and that we had written home, but while waiting for the baseball stuff to arrive we would carry on with our instruction classes. The next day Alex and I made a woolen baseball out of an old puttee, fixed up a temporary diamond, and showed the Tommies the general run of the game. Their antics were awful. If we had used regular baseballs I don't think there would have been a Tommy in the squad without a black eye. Did you ever watch a girl trying to catch a ball? Well a girls' team alongside of some of these Tommies would have looked like the winner in our World's Series. It was hard work keeping their interest up.

"Two weeks later we went 'up the line'; then came back again for another rest. The interest in baseball was dying out and we were at our wit's end. Time passed, and we figured out that we should be hearing from our appeal,

but nothing came. Then once again we went into the front line trench. The Tommies were getting very skeptical and every time baseball was mentioned they would gaze in our direction with a sneering look. This completely got our goats.

"One evening we were sitting in a dugout of the support trench: it was raining like the mischief, and we were cold and downhearted. Pretty soon the rations came up. As you know, the ration party generally brings the rations down into the dugouts, but the two men carrying our dixie set it down in the mud of the trench and almost shot the chutes down the entrance to the dugout. They were breathless with excitement. One of them yelled out:

"Yank, there 's a limber" (small two-wheeled wagon) "full of parcels down in the Sergeant-Major's dugout. They 're all addressed to you, and they 're from America.'

"Alex let out a shout and I felt warm all over. How we lorded it over those poor Tommies. That night we were to be relieved and

go back to rest billets. We could hardly wait for the time.

"The next morning was Sunday, and after church parade we made a mad rush to the Orderly Room to get our mail. The Quartermaster-Sergeant was waiting for me, and behind him stood every officer in the company, trying to disguise the expectant look on their faces. Every eye was turned in the direction of a heap of parcels. I thought the 'Quarter' never would start. Even the Captain could not stand it, and suppressing his eagerness, said: 'Sergeant, you had better issue the mail.' Alex and I were breathless with anxiety.

"Then, stooping down, the Sergeant took up a parcel and read off my name, and threw it over to me. I caught it on the fly. The Sergeant kept on reading out 'Yank' and parcels came through the air like a bombardment. The first parcel I picked up was stamped 'Passed by Censor' and contained twelve brand new balls, or, at least, eleven, and the remains

of one. This twelfth ball was stamped 'Opened by Censor,' but search as I could, I could find no stamp reading 'Sewed up by Censor.' We did the sewing up, but that ball looked like a duck's egg when we had finished. Alex and I roundly cussed the Censor. Later, we both cussed the inventor of baseball. There was a reason.

"The readers of the *Telegram* had nobly responded to our appeal. There were enough gloves and balls for two teams, and even a chest-protector and mask. The mask was an article of great curiosity to all. Some of them thought it was a bomb protector. Everyone in turn tried it on, and everyone, upon learning that the catcher was to wear the mask, wanted to immediately sign up for that position. Alex and I could have been elected to Parliament right there. The next afternoon, the candidates, forty in all, and the rest of the company, turned out *en masse* on the baseball field, which we had laid out during our previous stay in rest billets.

"From that day on, Alex and I led a dog's life. Though on paper everything looked bright, and the candidates were letter perfect in the game, or thought they were, on the field they were dubs of the worst caliber,—regular boneheads. If McGraw had had that mob wished on him, he would have chucked up his job and taken the stump for Women Suffrage, so you can appreciate our fix.

"Alex was a really good pitcher; plenty of curved stuff, having played semi-pro ball in the United States. It was my intention to catch for him, and fill in the other positions with the most likely candidates. This scheme did not work in with the popular version a little bit. Out of the forty trying for the team, twenty-eight insisted on being catcher. They wanted to secure that mask. If there had been a camera, each of the forty would have had a photo taken of himself wearing the 'wire cage.' Here was a great dilemma. At that time I was only a private, and there were Sergeants, Corporals, and even an officer who wanted

to catch. Alex again came to the rescue. Calling me aside he said:

" 'Leave it to me, Yank, I 'll fix 'em. I 'll try out each one in turn. Let him wear the mask, and I 'll send in some curves, and after the ball cracks them on the shins a couple of times you could n't pay 'em to put on the cage.'

"The Tommies were strange to curved balls, and Alex had speed. It did my heart good to see him dampen their ardor and dent their anatomy at the same time. The Tommies would see the ball coming to them and would reach up their hands to get it. Then the ball would break and hit them on the shin or knee. After five or six had retired, rubbing sore spots and cussing Alex out, no one else wanted to catch, and the situation was saved.

"Tommy is a natural born soccer player and clever with his feet, but stupid with his hands when it comes to baseball. Several of them had a bad habit of stopping grounders with their feet, especially our shortstop. He would see a hot grass-eater coming his way; then, in-

stead of using his hands, he would put the side of his foot in front of it. The ball would climb his leg and hit him in the chin or eye. After receiving a puffed-up lip and a beautiful black eye, he flatly refused to play unless I would let him wear the mask. (Americans, picture a shortstop wearing a catcher's mask, and then sympathize with Alex and me.) The shortstop was a Sergeant, and through diplomatic reasons I gave the mask to him. At this every infielder wanted to wear it. Alex solved this by putting in another shortstop and giving me the mask. (In England they have a game called 'Rounders,' in which you are supposed to hit the base runner with the ball to put him out. This is generally a tennis ball and does not hurt very much.) Well, those Tommies had a habit of lamming the baseball with all their might at the unfortunate runner. Many an early practice was broken up this way, because the team would lose interest in baseball when they had a chance to view a fight between a giver and receiver.

"After about ten days' practice we had picked two pretty fair teams and arranged for a scrub game. Alex's side won, thanks to his pitching. Then, as is usual in baseball, things began to happen. A jinx seemed to rest on our candidates. Every time we had to go up the line on a working party, one or two of the players would get wounded or killed; in fact, being a baseball player got to be a perfect Jonah, and the Tommies became superstitious. If one of our team happened to be working among ten or twelve other company men, he was sure to get hit, while the other fellows came through without a scratch. Alex and I also began to get frightened, and decided to chuck up the whole thing before we clicked it ourselves.

"Then we went further back behind the lines. During this stay we rounded out a passable team. A Canadian Battalion, just sent out from England on their way to 'Wipers,' went into billets about a mile from us. This was our chance. Alex went over and proposed a

game with them for the following Sunday. The challenge was accepted. We had a week's time in which to strengthen some weaknesses and to teach the bunch a little 'inside' baseball. Then the jinx popped up again. On the morning of the game with the Canadians, our cleverest infielder, the first baseman, picked up an old German hand grenade, and brought it to the billet. This man was a great souvenir collector; always hammering at 'dud' shells, trying to remove the nose-caps.

"On seeing him fooling around with the German bomb, I told him to throw it away, saying that one could never trust those things, and that I did not want to take any chances of losing a first baseman; but being of a naturally curious disposition, he refused to do so, and taking the bomb out behind the billet proceeded to take liberties with its mechanism: result, right hand blown off, and another vacancy to be filled at first base. What we said about him would have met with the highest approval of exponents of German Kultur.

"The game was scheduled for two o'clock, and at exactly one-thirty-five Mr. Fritz plunked a stray 'five-nine' shell into our infield between home and first base, making a hole big enough for a limber to hide in. This meant picks and shovels for all hands to fill in the hole. By this time a large crowd of rooters of both sides had lined themselves along the foul lines. The compliments that were wafted back and forth made the Sky Pilot pick up and leave before the game started.

"Betting waxed hot and furious. I don't believe there was a loose penny in the crowd after all bets had been placed. Alex and I tried to discourage this betting because we knew that if our side lost we would be ostracised from that time on. We explained to the Tommies that the Canadians were baseball players, and that we were in for an awful trimming, but they would n't listen, saying that anybody who could make a ball curve in the air the way Alex could was enough to win for any team, and all the Canadians could do

was to strike out. We argued no further, just sighed after losing the toss.

"We came to bat first. Our first man up got beaned, and instead of taking first base he went out in the pitcher's box to lick the pitcher. After a little argument we managed to get him on first. The Canadian pitcher was wild. The next ball went over the catcher's head and our runner took second. The next man up struck out. I batted third, hit to the outfield, the right fielder dropped the ball, and I reached second. The runner ahead of me walked to third base. Then Alex got up and placed a corking double out into left field. Alex was a fast runner. I started for home, touched third, the runner in front of me plowing along for home-plate. He ran like an ice wagon. I was shouting to him to hurry up. I could hear Alex pounding behind me. The Tommy's hat blew off, and instead of going home he stopped to pick up his hat. Alex was shouting, 'Leg it, here comes the ball,' as he slid into third base. Upon this the runner in

front of me ran back to third. I could not precede the runner in, and we were trapped on a double play. The Canadian rooters were tickled to death, and their sarcastic remarks burned into Alex and me. Alex was fast losing his temper.

The first two Canadians struck out, nearly breaking their backs trying to connect with Alex's outcurves. The third man up got his base on a passed third strike, my error.

"Then our substitute first baseman pulled a stunt which turned the tables on the Canadians. The Canadian was lying a few feet off first base. Suddenly our first baseman shouted at him, 'Look out, 'ere comes a shell, duck low.' The Canadian dropped to the ground. No shell. Alex instantly sized up the situation and tossed the ball to the first baseman, who touched the runner lying on the ground three feet from the bag. This retired the side. We had gotten our own back. Alex and I both could have kissed that rube first baseman of

ours. Right then and there we put him in a class with Hal Chase.

"Up to the fourth inning neither side scored. Alex was pitching in fine form. The Canadians just could n't connect with his delivery. All they could do was to fan the air. The Canadian rooters commenced to get frightened and they saw their money going into Tommies' pockets. They had the greatest contempt for the rest of the team, myself included, but realized that if Alex did not weaken, it would be a case for them to go back to billets broke.

"Then old Mr. Jinx butted in again, and it happened."

(In the British Army there is an order to the effect that gas helmets must be carried at all times, even while sleeping. To evade this order is a serious offense, and means immediate confinement. These gas helmets are in a canvas bag and are slung around the left shoulder by means of a canvas strap.)

"In pitching, Alex's gas helmet bothered

him greatly, and after the second inning he took it off. I warned him to be careful, because I noticed several Military Police in the crowd. But Alex would n't listen. He always was pig-headed. Suddenly one of the Canadian players spotted that Alex had laid aside his helmet, and artfully communicated this fact to the rest of his team's rooters. I noticed the rooters crowd around him for three or four minutes, and then a great laugh went up and they again stretched out along the foul lines.

"Suddenly, one fellow, getting out in front of the bunch, like a cheer leader, counted, 'One, Two, Three.' Then up went a mighty chorus of 'Hey, Alex, where 's your gas helmet, where 's your old gas bag.' They kept this up until it got Alex's goat. I went out into the pitcher's box and warned him to put it on, but, still pig-headed, he refused to do so. He was in an awful temper.

"A Sergeant of the Military Police was watching the game, and hearing the cries of

the rooters he walked out on the diamond and asked Alex where his helmet was. By this time Alex had completely lost his temper, and answered with a sneer: 'Where do you think it is; I sent it home for a souvenir.' The Sergeant explained to him that it was against Army orders to be without gas helmet, and that he had better put it on. Alex would not listen to him, and answered: 'Well, if it 's against orders, get them rescinded.' The Sergeant immediately put him under arrest and marched him off the diamond. Our hopes were dashed; I could see the game going West. We had no other good pitcher to go in.

"Upon seeing Alex's arrest, the Canadian rooters kept up their gleeful shouting. We were sure up against it. Here was the situation. It was the last half of the fourth inning, and two were out. If, by luck, we managed to get the third Canadian out, it would be an easy matter for them to retire us during our half of the next inning, because our weakest batting order was up. Then, the Canadians

would get busy and the slaughter would commence. I was in despair. Alex must have realized that the game was hopeless unless it could be finished in this inning, because as he passed me he whispered, 'Watch out for *gas;* I 'll make them hunt for *their* gas helmets. It 'll be a long time before that bunch of maple leaves forget this game. Now, get wise. Delay the game as much as possible while getting a dub ready to pitch in my place. Then watch for happenings. Get me? Are you wise?'

"I did n't 'get him,' nor was I 'wise,' but I answered in the affirmative. I followed his instructions, while out of the corner of my eye I watched him on his way to the company billet. He called to a man named Stein, a member of our company, who thought no more of losing a franc than he did of having his right arm shot off. Stein went over to Alex, who whispered to him and then handed him something. What struck me as strange was the fact that Stein, who had fifteen francs on the game, instead of coming back to watch the

game, disappeared behind the billet, while Alex was marched off to 'clink.' The rooters were getting impatient, so I put a big Welshman in to pitch. I told the umpire, a Battalion Sergeant-Major, that, according to rules, a pitcher being put in 'cold' was allowed four balls *over the plate* to warm up. The umpire agreed to this. I whispered to the Welshman, 'Get out in that box, and *take your time, delaying the game as much as possible between each pitch.* Now, you are allowed four balls *over the plate,*—remember, *over the plate,* in which to warm up. Slam 'em into me, but if you put four of them over our goose is cooked, so watch out.'

"The Welshman was mystified, but followed my instructions to the letter. He threw four balls which nearly broke my back to get. Then the umpire held up his hand and called 'Continue the game.' I immediately went over to him and explained that these four balls had not gone *over the plate!* He fell for this and agreed with me. After that rube of a

pitcher had thrown about fifteen or sixteen balls—several I let pass me, chasing them to the billet to delay the game—the umpire got impatient and the Canadian rooters were yelling like mad to 'Play ball.' I still insisted that none of the balls had gone over the plate, and the umpire was in a quandary. The Canadian team captain was kicking like a steer and offered to write home and send the umpire a million books of rules. Then one of our men passed in the rear of me and whispered, 'Alex says to go on with the game.' Wondering at this information, I started in.

"The pitching of that Welshman was awful. He hit the first two men up and walked the third. I was in despair, bases full and none out. Some of the Canadian rooters were jumping up and down throwing their hats in the air, and one fellow, looking squarely at me, commenced whistling 'The Star Spangled Banner.' This was the last straw." (Near every rest billet hangs a gas-gong. This is a triangular piece of steel or an empty shell-case.

Beside this gong hangs an iron striker. Upon the sound of the alarm, by striking on the gong with the striker, every man is supposed to put on his gas helmet and repair immediately to his proper station. These gongs are to warn soldiers that German poison gas is coming over.)

"While I was signaling to my rube pitcher, and beseeching him to put just *one* over, the clanging of the gas-gong rang out. I dropped my glove, got off my chest protector, and madly adjusted my gas helmet, the rooters and players doing the same. Then I got wise. I remembered Alex's instructions: 'Watch out for gas. I 'll make 'em hunt for *their* gas helmets.' The nerve and daring of it took my breath away. The Canadians had a mile to go to get to their stations, and believe me, it is no fun double-timing for a mile while a gas helmet is choking you with its chemical fumes.

"Well, those Canadians beat it, and so did we, but the game was saved and all bets were

off. I nearly smothered with laughter in my gas helmet. To the rest, not being 'in the know,' it was a genuine alarm. Shortly after the stampede it was discovered that the alarm was false, and a rigid investigation took place. But the Canadians had left and our money was safe. It certainly would have gone hard with the culprit had he been caught. As it was our Battalion got two weeks' extra fatigue on working and digging parties.

"Afterwards, I was let into the secret. Alex had given Stein ten francs to sound the gas alarm, which, with his fifteen francs bet on the game, Stein did not have it in his heart to refuse. Many a time Alex, Stein and myself had a quiet little laugh when we pictured the Canadians stampeding for their billets.

"Then, orders were received to take over a new sector of the line, and baseball was forgotten. Baseballs gave way to hand grenades.

"Not long after that Alex was killed, and Stein wounded. Thus ended the career of the Fusilier Giants."

"BLIGHTY!—WHAT HOPES?"

As Told by Sailor Bill

"BLIGHTY!—WHAT HOPES?"

IT was Sailor Bill's turn. Clearing his voice, he commenced:

"When h'I was in the N'vy—"

"None of that," interrupted Curly. "You 're in the Army now, and we are sick of hearing you gas about the Navy. How about it, fellows, make him tell an army story."

The rest all agreed with Curly, and insisted that Bill tell of an army experience, leaving out as much as possible his nautical terms, which were Greek to them.

Sailor Bill, highly peeved, insisted that he could n't recall at that time that anything worth telling about had happened to him in the army.

Ikey asked, "You were wounded, were n't you? Well, tell us about your trip to Blighty. We can stand anything."

After two or three minutes of pretended hard thinking, Sailor Bill lighted his pipe (which was worse than German gas), and commenced:

"The second battle o' Wipers was still blowin'. I 'ad run amuck with three bullets (rifle, I think) during my cruise over the top. One caught me on the port side o' my compass and nearly carried away my port light, while the other two came aboard my starboard shoulder.

"I remember bein' lowered down a companionw'y into a brightly lit 'old an' placed on a blinkin' slab. Must a'been a first aid dugout. 'Pills' an' a Sergeant bent over me, an' after guessin' awhile said 'chloroform.' Then they tried to choke me by placin' a gas 'elmit over my forepeak.

"I blinkin' well gawsped for h'air a couple o' times, an' then the riggin' started topplin' about me. It was blowin' big guns an' my wind was cut h'off. Suddenly I lamped Big Ben makin' fyces at the Tower o' Lundun an' a bloody Whitechapel bus started crawlin'

around Big Ben's fyce like a blinkin' fly. About this time the steam pipes busted, an' what with a lot o' hissin' an' rushin' noises, I took a temporary trip to D'vy Jones Locker.

"I opened me deadlights. I were aboard a stretcher, swathed in blankets, in a low-decked wooden buildin'. Across the w'y from me were a long row o' stretchers, each havin' a wounded Tommy for a cargo. Some were a-lyin' flat, while others were trussed up by folded blankets. Others were sittin' on their stretchers, a-nursin' o' wounded h'arms.

"Between bells a stretcher 'oldin' a Tommy would be carried down the deck by two stretcher-bearers, an' stowed aw'y in the opposite row.

"I could 'ear a bloody racket all about me, an' when I cyme out o' the fog, I got aboard o' their talk.

"My starboard mitt seemed like it were lashed to the stretcher. I could n't budge it. Squirmin' about, which set the pain a shootin' through me timbers an' started the seams, I

turned me unbandaged lamp in the direction o' me wrist to see what was a-'oldin' of it.

"An R. A. M. C." (Royal Army Medical Corps) "lubber were a-'oldin' 'ands with me as if I were a bloomin' girl on a bench in the park. 'E were about twenty years h'old, nothin' but a blinkin' kid, an' looked dog-tired, about time for 'is watch below. 'Is chin would gradually sink on 'is chest as if 'e were a-fallin' h'asleep. Then 'e would remember that 'e were on watch, an' would turn to with a jerk.

"After awhile 'is 'ead got too 'eavy for 'is neck to 'old, an' battenin' down 'atches h'over 'is lamps 'e doused the glim.

"I gave me starboard flipper a jerk an' 'e h'opened 'is h'eyes. Then across 'is face flashed a smile. In my w'y o' thinkin' it sort er reminded me o' sunrise at sea. Anyw'y it sent a warm glow through me for'ard an' h'aft. That smile gave me a 'ankerin' after that kid. Then came a squall. 'E h'opened 'is mouth an' I knew I 'ad left the cabin for the fo'c'sle an' a bloody Cockney one at that.

" 'Strafe me pink, but you do tyke your own bloomin' time to come out o' chloroform. 'Ere h'I 'ave been bloody well balmy a-'oldin' your blinkin' pulse like some tart down in Piccadilly.'

"Out o' the corner o' me mouth I awsked 'im:

" 'What port 's this? Where am I?'

"Still a-smilin', 'e 'ailed a stretcher-bearer across the w'y:

" 'H'I s'y, 'Awkins, this blighter wants a bloomin' map o' Frawnce; 'e wants to know where 'e h'is.'

" 'Awkins yelled back:

" 'Wants to know where 'e h'is? What bloody cheek! Tell 'im 'e 's bloomin' well in Sam Isaac's fish 'ouse down Totten'am Court Road, a-waitin' fer 'is order o' fish an chips.'

"This brought out a blinkin' roar from the Tommies on me starboard an' port beams.

"I got sort er riled, an', Yank, 'avin' a-visited New York, I tried to come aboard with some o' that Yankee swank, somethin' like this:

"'Aw cut it up. Quit yer kiddin'. Yer brains are dusty. What 's the matter, am I wounded?'

"The R. A. M. C. man, with that smile still a-shinin' from 'is port-'oles, which made me feel kind o' shamed like at me resentment, awnswered:

"'Naw, myte, you h'ain't wounded. You just 'appened to fall down in the bloomin' road an' one o' those blinkin' tanks crawled over you.'

This scared me a little, an' I sort er pleaded:

"'Cawn't you please tell me; what is the matter with me?'

"'E leaned over an' read from a little tag pinned to me tunic:

"'G. S. W. left face; two, right shoulder. Cot.'

"Then 'e carried on:

"'H'it means that you 'ave a gunshot wound, a bullet through the left side o' your clock, an' two bullets through the right shoulder, an' that you 're a cot case, which means that you

won't 'ave to bloody well walk. Two of us poor blokes will 'ave to carry you on a stretcher. You sure are a lucky bloke; pretty cushy, I calls it.'

"I awsked 'im if the wounds were good for Blighty.

"He answered:

" 'Yes, they 're good for Blighty, an' h'I 'm a thinkin' that they 're good for a discharge. That right h'arm o' your'n will be out o' commission for the rest o' your life. Your wife, if you 've got one, will bloomin' well 'ave to cut your meat for you, that is, if you 're lucky enough to buy any blinkin' meat on the pension the Top 'Ats at 'ome will 'and you.'

"A feelin' o' pride ran through me. In a 'ospital o' wounded soldiers, a severely wounded case is more or less looked up to, while a man with a slight wound is treated as an ordinary mortal. I could read respect, per'aps mixed up with a little h'envy, in the h'eyes o' the surroundin' Tommies.

"The door at the h'end o' the ward h'opened.

A 'owl came from the cot on me starboard, an' a gruff Irish voice shouted:

" 'Close that damned door. You bloomin' 'ospital men 'ave no sinse at all. 'Ere I am, knocked about by a blinkin' shell an' the likes o' youse puts me in a bloody draught. It 's a good thing we 'ave a n'vy; with the likes o' you blokes in the h'army, we certainly need one.'

"A laugh went up from the rest. Then a Tommy on my port answered this outburst with:

" 'Bloody nerve, I call it. 'Ere 'e is, a-covered with blankets an' grousin' about a little drawft, an' not many hours back 'e was a-lyin' in a bloomin' shell 'ole, with the wind a-blowin' the whiskers off'n 'im, an' 'e a-prayin' for the stretcher-bearers. I 'll wager a quid 'e belongs to the Royal h'Irish Rifles.'

"The man on me starboard retorted:

" 'No, I 'm not in the Royal Irish Rifles, but I belong to a good outfit—the Royal Dublin Fusileers, an' I can lick the man that says they ain't. So don't get so damn sharp.'

"Just then, from amidships in the ward, came the voice of a stretcher-bearer:

" 'Jones, get the M. O." (Medical Officer). "Hurry up—quick! This poor bloke 's a-goin' West.

"The man 'oldin' my 'and suddenly let go 'is grip, an' a-risin' to 'is feet, 'urriedly left the ward. There was dead silence 'tween decks. I tried to turn in the direction from which the first voice 'ad come, but the sharp pain in me shoulder warned me that I was on a lee shore.

"In a few seconds the door h'opened an' I could 'ear low voices down in the corner. I could see the Tommies around me h'intently gazing in this one direction. Awfter a few minutes the door again h'opened an' closed, an' Jones came back. I looked up at 'im an' 'e solemnly nodded.

"One more bloke 'ad gone West for 'is King an' Country.

"Me unbandaged lamp suddenly ran into a fog an' sprung a leak, the bilge water runnin' down me side.

"The door at the other h'end o' the ward h'opened an' two stretcher-bearers h'entered an' went in the direction o' the dead bloke. Pretty soon they came back with a stretcher in tow on which were a still form covered with a blanket, an' left the ward. The Irishman on me starboard was a-repeatin' to 'imself:

" 'Poor bloke, poor bloke; 'e sure 'as done 'is bit, an' it won't be long before 'e 'll be a-pushin' up the daisies somewhere in Frawnce. An' before this war is h'over there 'll be lots more in the same fix, I 'm a-thinkin'.'

"One o' the Tommies, swankin' to be brave, h'addressed Jones:

" 'What 's 'is nyme, Mike? What battalion is 'e from?'

"Jones awnswered:

" 'James Collins, a Lawnce Corporal out o' the Royal Warwicks; five machine gun bullets through the right lung—'emorrhage.'

"The blinkin' door ag'in h'opened, an' two stretcher-bearers h'entered carryin' a Tommy, 'is 'ead lyin' flat, an' the smell of h'ether almost

turned me stomick. I knew it were a case from the Pictures" (operating-room). "The stretcher-bearers placed 'im to the starboard o' the Irishman.

"Jones now left me, an' gettin' a little white basin, went h'over to the new h'arrival. The Tommies turned h'inquirin' looks in 'is direction. 'E knew what they meant all right, an' read from the tag:

" 'Shell wound in left foot,—h'amputation.'

"I knew that I 'ad lost me prestige.

"In a short while the form on the stretcher began to mumble. This mumblin' soon turned into singin, an' that Tommy certainly could sing! 'E must 'ave been a comedian in civilian life, because we were soon a-roarin' with laughter. 'Arry Tate, the famous h'English comedian, in 'is fair weather d'ys, never 'ad a no more h'appreciative h'audience. H'awfter a bit the singin' stopped an' the Tommies began talkin' at each other. The main topic o' their conversation were Blighty—what 'opes! Each one was a-'opin' that 'is wound was serious

enough for 'im to be sent to h'England. The stretcher-bearers were fairly pestered with questions as to what chawnce they 'ad o' reachin' a Lunnun public-'ouse. I believe they all h'envied the bloke under h'ether, with a left foot a-missin'; 'e was sure to click Blighty.

"A Sergeant-M'jor o' the R. A. M. C. h'entered the ward like a blinkin' Admiral comin' aboard. All o' the medical men stood at attention, except one or two a-takin' care o' serious cases. The Sergeant-M'jor ordered:

"'Get this ward in shape. The M. O. is comin' through in five minutes to h'inspect cases an' clear out.'

"The R. A. M. C. men went from cot to cot, carefully smoothin' h'out blankets an' tuckin' in loose ends, an' pickin' h'up fag h'ends." (Cigarette butts.)

"The Sergeant-M'jor pulled out.

"In about ten minutes, the door again h'opened, an' with a smart 'shun' from the Sergeant-M'jor, who came in first, all what was able came to attention, an' the doctor h'entered,

a clerk, and a R. A. M. C. Sergeant followin' in 'is wake. 'E stopped at each cot, carefully read the tag on the wounded man h'occupyin' it, passed a few remarks which the clerk jotted down on a pad of paper, an' as 'e left each wounded soldier, 'e 'ad a cheerin' remark for 'im.

"When 'e came to me 'e awsked:

" 'Well, 'ow are you feelin' me lad, at the same time stoopin' over an' readin' from me tag:

" 'Ummm—three rifle bullets; well, me lucky fellow, h'it means h'England for you.'

"H'I could 'ave blinkin' well a-kissed 'im for them words.

"Then 'e passed to the Irishman on me starboard. Bendin' over 'im 'e awsked:

" ' 'Ow are you, me lad?'

"The Irishman, thick-like, awnswered:

" 'I 'm damned sick, an' I want to get out o' 'ere; I want to get out o' 'ere, out o' this draught. Ivery tin minutes they 're openin' and a-shuttin' that door.'

"The doctor, winkin' 'is lamp, turned to the R. A. M. C. Sergeant, an' said:

" 'Shrapnel, left foot, knee an' right breast. I see no reason why this man won't be ready for duty in a couple o' d'ys.'

"The Irishman, bloody near jumpin' over the side o' 'is cot, yelled:

" 'Dooty, how in the 'ell can I do dooty when I cawn't blinkin' well walk?'

"The doctor answered:

" 'That 'll be all right, me lad. We 'll fix you h'up with a cushy job at Brigade 'Eadquarters, a-poundin' a typewriter.'

"The Irishman, with a moan of disgust, addressin' nobody in particular, sighed:

" 'Out since Mons, an' h'I h'end up with workin' a bloody typewriter at 'Eadquarters. Stick me in skirts an' I 'll go as a manicurist.'

"The doctor went to the next case an' soon left the ward.

"As soon as the door closed, a string of oaths came from the Irishman:

" 'Poundin' a —— —— typewriter at 'Eadquarters; just like the bloody British h'Army; what in 'ell do I know about one o' those writin'-machines? Just me luck. Why could n't that shell 'ave 'it me in the 'ands? But, I s'pose, if I 'd a' lost me bloody 'ands they 'd myke a tight-rope walker out o' me.'

"Awfter a bit 'e sorter cooled down, an' to keep conversation a-goin', I awsked 'im, sort o' innocent-like:

" 'Where did you get wounded?'

" 'E let out another bloody 'owl, this time at me, an' said:

" 'Of all the damn fools, you 're a-leadin' o' them. I got wounded in the blinkin' Crimean War, 'elpin' Napoleon tyke Josephine across the Alps, 'ad me blinkin legs blown off at the wrists an' me 'ead cut h'off at me waist. Is there anything else I kin be enlightenin' you of? If not, keep yer tongue in that bloody cave o' yourn.'

"A-laughin' made me wounds 'urt, so I battened down 'atches an' lay to.

"Awfter the laughin' at the Irishman 'ad died out, the Tommies started eagerly questioning each h'other:

" 'What did 'e sye to you? Are you good for Blighty? 'E marked h'England on me tag! What does Base 'Ospital mean? Does it mean that I 'm to stick h'out in this bloody mess while you blokes are a-goin' to Blighty?' etc., etc.

"Pretty soon a stretcher-bearer came in a-carryin' a little, oblong green box, which we all knew 'eld Woodbines. 'E were greeted with a chorus of:

" 'Gimme a fag, Mike; I 'm all out. Come on, chum, don't forget me. That 's a good fellow. Let 's 'ave one.'

"It were n't long before every Tommy who were fit 'ad a fag between 'is lips. A sigh o' content went up as they inhaled deep puffs o' smoke. Mine was jake.

"Awfter me smoke I were a-feelin' pretty ship-shape, an' tried another shot at the Irishman. I awsked 'im:

" 'Come on, myte, tell me 'ow you were 'it. 'Ow did it 'appen?'

"No answer.

"I tried again. Still no blinkin' awnswer. Raisin' myself on my good elbow, an' it 'urt like 'ell, I took a look at 'im. 'Is fyce were like putty, an' 'is mouth were h'open. I yelled to one of the R. A. M. C. men, who came a-runnin', an' h'I pointed at that chalky fyce. 'E bent over 'im, felt 'is pulse, lifted 'is blinkin' eyelids, an' then took it on the run for the doctor.

"The doctor came in an' did pretty near as what the R. A. M. C. man 'ad done, straightened up, an' shook 'is 'ead. That bloke 'ad gone West under our blinkin' noses. H'internal 'emorrhage, they called it. Must a-tried to turn over an' started bleedin' on the inside.

"In about five minutes, two orderlies came in an 'oisted 'im onto a stretcher, an' 'e took 'is lawst ride at the expense o' the Government.

" 'Is death knocked the wind out o' our sails, an' there were a dead calm in that ward.

"Near twenty minutes awfter the poor bloke 'ad been carried aw'y one o' the R. A. M. C. men noticed a' open letter where the Irishman 'ad been. It were all muddy an' a-covered with blood stains. 'E picked it up, an' slowly turned it over an' over, an' then started to read, in a low voice, with the water a-tricklin' down 'is fyce. I could just h'about 'ear 'im. It were from the Irishman's nipper, an' as well as I can remember, went somethin' like this:

"*Dear Daddy:*

" 'Urry up an' win the war an' come 'ome, 'cause me an' Mamma an' Mary is lonesome. Mamma cries lots when she 's alone by herself, but sometimes I sees 'er, an' then she smiles an' says she wants me when I grow up to be a man, to be brave like you is, Daddy.

"Day before yesterday I licked Mike Casey an' 'e 's goin' on twelve, too, 'cause 'e said 'is father was braver than you, just 'cause 'is father won an old D. C. M. medal. After lickin' 'im, I told 'im you could win a million D. C. M. medals, but that you did n't want none. Did you, Daddy? But get one, anyway, just to show 'im.

"Last Sunday Mamma read out o' the newspapers that there was a big battle against the dirty Germans, an' cried a lot. She said you were in it,

Daddy, an' I said then we won, because Daddy will win for us. She 'as been crying a awful lot. 'Urry an' come 'ome, Daddy, an' make Mamma smile again, an' bring a German prisoner to do the work so as Mamma can rest from takin' in washin'. She says food is awful 'igh, an' she 'as lost 'er h'appetite, but me an' Mary eats just as much, so don't worry, Daddy.

"Mamma is out gettin' the wash, so I am writin' to surprise you, an' she don't know. We will tell 'er some day, won't we, Daddy, an' make 'er smile again.

"Goodbye, Daddy, an' I always ask the Priest to say prayers fer you, Daddy, an' I say them myself, an' so does Mamma an' Mary an' Jim, our new dog.

"Much love an' kisses from me, an' Mamma, an' Mary an' Jim.

"Your lovin' son,

"JOHNNY.

"P. S.—Don't fergit to come 'ome."

"That letter from 'is little nipper made me 'eart ache, an' 'e a-lyin' dead somewhere in Frawnce. The R. A. M. C. man left the ward with the letter, a-leakin' from both eyes.

"The Sergeant-Major again entered. The R. A. M. C. men came to attention. 'E ordered:

" 'Get the convoy for h'England ready.

Look alive, the h'ambulances are h'expected any minute.'

"The stretcher-bearers started knockin' about, an' the ship was in an uproar. Then, outside, h'I could 'ear the chuggin' of the engines in the waitin' ambulances.

"H'as each lucky bloke were carried out, the more unfortunate ones, who were to be left be'ind in the Base 'Ospital, bravely wished 'im a 'Good luck, myte; give my regards to Trafalgar Square. Be careful, an' don't lose your blinkin' watch in Petticoat Lane.'

"H'as I were carried through the door the cold h'air sent a shiver through me, an' my wounds began to pain. The h'effect o' the chloroform were a-wearin' off, or it might 'a' been that letter. Lanterns were a-flashin' to an' fro, an' long lines o' stretchers could be seen movin' toward the waitin' h'ambulances.

"I were put aboard an ambulance with three others. A raspin' noise as she got under w'y, an' I were 'omeward bound for Blighty."

When Sailor Bill had finished, no one broke the silence.

They were all thinking of Johnny.

ROUNDING UP SPIES

As Told by Curly

ROUNDING UP SPIES

NO. 2 Gun's Crew had been relieved from the front line and were in rest billets in the little French village of S——, about ten kilos from the front line trench.

The crew were sitting on the ground in a circle around their machine-gun, while a Sergeant, newly returned from a special course at St. Omer, was expounding the theory of scientific machine-gunnery. He himself had never actually been under fire with a machine-gun, but, from the theoretical point, he sure could throw out the book stuff. His flow of eloquence passed over his listeners' heads like a Zeppelin, and there was an uneasy squirming among them.

Happy, who was sitting next to Yank, leaned over, and with his eye on the Sergeant, whispered in his ear:

"Blime me, Yank, is n't it arful the w'y 'e chucks 'is weight about?'

Yank agreed with Happy.

Across from Yank sat Ikey, with their mascot, a scrawny little cur, in his lap. Every now and then the cur would take his hind leg and furiously scratch at a spot behind his ear. Ikey, noticing this action, would reach under his armpit, and also scratch.

Sailor Bill was intently watching the mascot and Ikey. He, too, started scratching.

In a minute or so, Hungry started on a cootie hunt; and Yank had an irresistible desire to lean his back against the barrel-casing of the gun and scratch, too.

It was one of the chief indoor sports of the Western Front, especially during a monotonous lecture by some officer or non-com, for one of the fed-up listeners to start scratching himself. This generally caused the whole gang to do the same, the instructor included. It was just like a minister in the midst of a very dry sermon, suddenly stopping, stretching himself,

and yawning, this action causing the rest of the congregation to do likewise.

As the whole circle scratched, the Sergeant-Instructor commenced to shift his weight from one foot to the other in an uneasy manner. They all gazed at him intently, and each began to scratch furiously. Sure enough, the Sergeant gave in and started unbuttoning the front of his tunic to get at some real or imaginary cootie. A nudge went the rounds of the circle. They had accomplished their purpose. The Sergeant's mind took an awful drop from the science of machine-gunnery to that of catching that particular cootie.

The gun's crew glanced at their wrist watches. Fifteen minutes more and the lesson would be over. The Sergeant was becoming confused, and was trying to flounder through the rest of his talk. They had no mercy on him, but kept up the scratching. At last, in desperation, he said:

"You men have actually been under fire with machine-guns several times. Can't one of you

relate some incident of how, through some ruse, you put it over on the Boches?"

Ikey, grasping this golden opportunity to break up the lecture, and slyly winking at us, started in and told how a certain gun's crew located and put out of action a German machine-gunner by playing a tune on their gun; the German tried to imitate it, thereby indicating to them by sound the exact location of the German gun, which was later put out of action by concentrated fire from their section.

Of course, the whole circle listened very intently, but it was an old story to them; they were the gun's crew which had accomplished the feat that Ikey was describing. Still, anything was better than listening to that sing-song droning of book knowledge which the Sergeant had been pumping into them for the last hour and a half.

The Sergeant glanced at his watch, and dismissed them. They dismounted their gun, put it in its box and stored it away in their billet.

Then, reassembled under an apple-tree in the orchard, and while the rest of them indulged in a shirt hunt, Hungry went after their ration of tea. Hungry was sure on the job when it came to eating. Pretty soon he returned with a dixie a quarter full of tea, two tins of jam, a loaf of bread, a large piece of cheese, and a tin of apricots which he had bought at a nearby French estaminet.

He dished out the rations, not forgetting a generous share for himself. After they had finished, out came the inevitable fags, a few puffs from each man, and the ball of conversation started rolling:

Curly cleared his throat and started in:

"Remember that village we passed through on our march up the line about two weeks ago; you know, the one where that big church with all the shell-holes in it was right on the corner where we turned to the left to take the road to St. A——?"

They all remembered it, and turned inquiring glances in Curly's direction.

"Well, this morning, when I went down to the 'Quarter' (Quartermaster-Sergeant), to draw coal, I met a fellow at Divisional Headquarters who told me a mighty interesting story of how he and another fellow rounded up a couple of spies.

"This bloke, I suppose, through modesty, and to cover up his own good work, tried to make me believe that it was only through a lucky chance that they stumbled over the clue which led to the spies' arrest, but it 's my opinion, and I know you 'll all agree with me, that it was not so much luck as it was clever thinking. I 'm not much at telling a story, but I 'm going to try and give it, as far as I can remember, just the way he handed it out to me.

"It seems that this fellow, who told me the story, and another chap, had been detailed to the Divisional Intelligence Department, and were hanging around Division Headquarters waiting for something to happen.

"Now here 's the story as he reeled it off to me:

" 'About three kilos behind Divisional Headquarters was the old French village of B——. One of our important roads ran through it. This road was greatly used by our troops for bringing up supplies and ammunition for the front line. It was also used by large numbers of troops when relieving batteries in the fire sector.

" 'Of course, on account of this road being in range of the German guns, it could only be used at night; otherwise, the enemy airmen and observation balloons would get wise and it would only be a short time before the road would be shelled, causing many casualties.

" 'For the last ten days, reports had been received at Divisional Headquarters that every time troops passed a certain point on this road, marked by an old church, they were sure to click heavy shell-fire from the Boches. On nights when no troops passed through, on the other hand, there would be very little shelling, if any.

" 'Upon the first two or three of these re-

ports, we put it down as a strange coincidence, but when the fifth report of this nature reached us, it was evident to us that a spy was at work, and that in some mysterious way the information of the movement of our troops was communicated by him to the enemy.

" 'Myself and another fellow, who had been working with me for the last two weeks, were assigned to the task of discovering and apprehending this spy. To us it seemed an impossible job, as there were no clues to work upon. As is usual, our General, Old Pepper, called us in, and said:

" ' "There is a spy working in the village of B——; go get him."

" 'Foolishly I butted in and asked for further information. I got it, all right. With a lowering look which made me tremble, he roared:

" ' "Go and dig up your own clues. What are you with the Intelligence Department for? Intelligence Department! It ought to be called Brainless Department, if you two are a sample of the rest."

" 'Somehow or other we did n't stop to argue with Old Pepper.' "

At this point, Sailor Bill butted in:

"Blime me, he 's just like an Admiral we had in our Navy, this old boy."

A chorus of, "Oh, shut up, you 're in the Army now," cut off Bill's story. They knew Sailor Bill. With an indignant glance around the circle, he relapsed into silence.

Curly exclaimed, "To hell with your Admiral; do you want to hear this story? If you do, shut up and let me tell it."

"Go on, Curly, never mind; he 's harmless," ejaculated Happy.

Curly carried on with:

" 'Getting our packs and drawing three days' rations, we started hiking it for the village of B——. We arrived there about four in the afternoon, and after putting our packs and rations in an old barn, which we intended to use as our billet during our stay in the village, we left on a general tour of inspection.

" 'There were about three hundred civilians

in the place who preferred to brave the dangers of shell-fire, as there was a rich harvest to be reaped from the sale of farm produce, beer and wine to the troops billeted all around. Two estaminets were still open, and did a thriving business.

" 'Occasionally a shell would burst in the village, but the civilians did not seem to mind it; just carried on with their farming and business as usual.

" 'We decided to make a thorough search of all houses, barns and buildings for concealed wires. We did so, but with barren results. Nothing suspicious was found. This search wasted five days, and we were in desperation. Watch and wish as we would, not a single clue came to light.

" 'During this time two large bodies of troops had passed through and each time they were heavily shelled with dire results.

" 'On the sixth night of our assignment, utterly disgusted, I, being in charge, had decided to chuck up the whole business and report back

to Old Pepper that we had made a mess out of the investigation. My partner pleaded with me to stick it out a couple of days more, and after he gave me a vivid description of what Old Pepper would hand out to us, I decided to stick it out for six months, if necessary.

" 'To celebrate this decision, my side-kicker offered to blow to several rounds of drinks. Now, this fellow had never, during my acquaintance with him, offered to spend a ha'penny, so I quickly accepted his offer and we went to the nearest estaminet.

" 'Sitting around a long table, drinking French beer and smoking cigarettes, was a crowd of soldiers, laughing, joking, arguing and telling stories.

" 'We sat down at the end of the table, and in low tones, tried to work impossible theories as to how the spy, if there was one, and by this time we were getting doubtful, could get the information back to the German batteries.

" 'Right across from us were two soldiers arguing about farming. Suddenly my side-

kicker pinched me on the knee and whispered:

" ' "Listen to what those two fellows across the table from us are saying. It sounds good."

" 'I listened for about a minute and then paid no further attention. At that time farming in no way interested me. I wanted to catch that spy, and started devising impossible theories as to the ways and means of doing so. At last I gave up in disgust. My partner was still attentively listening to the two across the table from us. Another poke in the knee from my partner, and I was all attention.

" 'One of the fellows across the way was talking.

" ' "Well, I don't see why this French blighter should change horses in his plow every afternoon. I 've watched him for several days. Now, in the morning he uses two greys, and then about two in the afternoon he either hooks up two blacks or a grey and a black. French ways may be different, but this frog-eater is very partial to the colors of his team. Figure it out for yourself. He starts work with the

two greys about six o'clock in the morning; works the two beggars up till noon. That 's six hours straight. Then he sticks them in the stable, lays off for two hours, and in the afternoon about two o'clock the new relay of animals come on and work up till four. Now, anybody with any brains in their nappers knows that that is no way to keep horses in condition, working one team over six hours and the other team only two hours. I know because we have been farmers in our family back in Blighty for generations."

" 'I was all excitement, and a great hope surged through me that at last we had fallen on the clue that we were looking for. Restraining my eagerness as much as possible, I addressed the fellow who had just spoken:

" ' "Well, mate, I don't like to intrude into your conversation, but I 've also been a farmer all my life, and I don't see anything so queer in the actions of this French farmer."

" 'He answered, "Well, blime me, there might be a reason for this blighter doing this,

but I can't figure it out at all. If you can explain it, go ahead."

" 'I answered, "Well, perhaps if you can give a little more details about it, it would be easy enough to explain. Who is this farmer, and where is his farm located?"

" 'He swallowed the bait all right, and informed me that the farmer was plowing a field on a hill about five hundred yards west of the church at the point where our troops were being shelled.

" 'Buying a round of drinks, I nudged my partner and he came in on the conversation. The two of us, by adroit questioning, got the exact location of the field, and a description of the farmer.

" 'I pretended to be sleepy, and, yawning, got up from the table saying that I was going to turn in, and left. My partner soon followed me. Upon reaching our billet we outlined our plan. We decided that next morning we would get up at daybreak, and scout around the field to see if there was a hiding-place.

" 'Sure enough, along one edge of the field ran a thick hedge. We secreted ourselves in this, and waited for developments.

" 'At about six in the morning, the farmer appeared, driving two greys, which he hooked to the plow, and carried on with his work. To us there appeared nothing suspicious in his actions. We watched him all morning. At noon he unhooked the horses and went home. We remained in hiding, afraid to leave, because we wanted to take no chances of being seen by the farmer. We had forgotten to bring rations with us, so it was a miserable wait until two o'clock, at which time the farmer reappeared, driving two blacks, which he hitched to the plow, and carried on until four o'clock, and then knocked off for the day. That night troops came through as usual, and were shelled.

" 'Next morning, at daybreak, we again took our stations in the hedge, this time bringing rations with us. The farmer used the same greys in the morning, but in the afternoon he appeared with a black and a grey, and again

knocked off around four o'clock. No troops came through that night, and there was no shelling.

" 'Next day, the farmer repeated the previous day's actions,—two greys in the morning, and a black and a grey in the afternoon,—no troops, no shelling.

" 'We were pretty sure that we had him, but this arresting a spy on slim evidence is a ticklish matter. We did n't want to make a mess of the affair, or perhaps send an innocent man to his death, so the following day we again took up our stations. Sure enough, it was two greys in the morning, but in the afternoon he used two blacks. That night troops came through and were shelled. We had solved the problem. Two greys in the morning meant nothing. The actual signal to the enemy was the change of horses in the afternoon; two blacks meaning "troops coming through tonight, shell the road"; a grey and a black, "no troops expected, do not shell."

" 'When it got dark, and it was safe to leave

the hedge, we immediately reported the whole affair to the Town Major (an English officer detailed in charge of a French village or town occupied by English troops), who, accompanied by us and a detail of six men with fixed bayonets, went to the farmer's house that night and arrested him. He protested his innocence, but we took him to Military Police Headquarters, where, after a gruelling questioning, he confessed.

" 'It was a mystery to us how this farmer knew that troops were coming through, because he never made a mistake in his schedule. After further questioning, he explained to us that if we searched in his cellar and raised up an old flag-stone with a ring in it, we would find a telephone set. The other end of this set was established in an estaminet in a little French village eleven kilos distant. His confederate was the proprietor of this estaminet, which was so situated on the road that troops coming into the village had to pass the door. As troops only march at night while in the fire sector, his

confederate could safely figure out that the passing troops would be quartered in his village until the next night, when, under cover of darkness, they would start for the next village, and would have to pass the point in the road by the old church. He would immediately telephone this information to the farmer, who would change his horses accordingly. The hill on which he did his plowing could be easily observed from an observation balloon in the German lines, and thus the signal was given to the German artillery.

" 'We still carried on with our third degree, and got further valuable information from him.

" 'If, in the plowing, two grey horses were used on two consecutive afternoons, it meant that the use of the road had been indefinitely discontinued for troops and supplies.

" 'Under a strong guard, which concealed itself in the hedge, the farmer was made to use two greys for two afternoons. The scheme worked. For weeks afterwards that road was only occasionally shelled, and our troops and

supply trains used it at will. The spy at the other end was rounded up and both were taken to the base and shot.

" 'We reported back to Old Pepper, expecting to be highly commended for our work, and we were—I don't think. All the blooming blighter said was:

" ' "Well, you certainly took long enough to do it. I have a damn good mind to send you back to your units for incompetency and inefficiency."

" 'We saluted and left.

" 'You see, we did n't deserve any great credit because it was only through a lucky chance that we stumbled over the clue. So I guess Old Pepper was right after all.'"

After Curly had finished, everyone agreed with Happy's comment:

"Pretty nifty work, I call it, pretty nifty!"

"HORSES FOR FRANCE"

As Told by Yank

"HORSES FOR FRANCE"

"JUST lend me your ear and I 'll spin you a yarn about a trip I made on a horse ship back in 1914," said Yank, as he took a deep breath from his Woodbine and settled back against the wall of the dugout.

"Well, Yank, let 's have the story," chimed in the rest.

"All right, heels together and eyes front. Here goes," answered Yank.

"It was in 1914, and the Great World's War was on, and there was I, in the United States and—*neutral.* For thirteen years I had been soldiering but had never been under fire. In my imagination I could hear the guns booming on the Western Front. I admit I was a trifle afraid; nevertheless, I had a great desire to get into the mix-up. How could I get

over? I planned out many ways, but not one of them was practical.

"One day, while walking down Greenwich Avenue, New York, I passed an employment agency. Staring me in the face was a great flaring sign, 'Horses for France.' Under this was 'Men Wanted.' Here was my chance.

"Upon returning to my office I immediately got in touch, over the telephone, with two prominent men in New York who I knew were distinctly pro-Ally. After I had outlined my desire, an appointment was made for me to meet a certain gentleman at the Hotel Astor at four o'clock that afternoon. I met him. He was a Frenchman. At that time, in my eyes, a Frenchman was a hero, a man to be looked up to, a man fighting in the Great Cause. But now a Frenchman to me is more than a hero. After being introduced I went up into the Frenchman's room and talked over the matter of horses for France for about twenty minutes.

"Upon leaving the Frenchman I was told

to report to him three days later, at the same time and place. I left, bubbling over with enthusiasm and anticipation.

"During that interval of three days I mapped out a story of my life to present to him upon our second interview. The eventful day at last came, and once more I was closeted with him.

"I started in to tell him my history. He interrupted me by waving his right hand to the right and left. It reminded me of the 'butts' on a target range during rifle practice, when the soldier marking the target wigwags a miss to the firing-line. My heart sank. Then he spoke, and I was carried from despondency to the greatest height of expectation. He said: 'Pardon me, Monsieur, I already know your life,' and in an amazingly short time he told me more about myself than I ever knew. I had been carefully investigated.

"My instructions received from him were confidential, so I will not go into them. Anyway, he handed me an envelope and told me to

carefully follow all instructions as contained therein.

"I immediately went back to my office, opened the envelope and on a typewritten sheet I read: 'Report at Goldsmith's Employment Agency, No. —— Greenwich Street. Ship as an ordinary horseman and during voyage carefully follow the verbal instructions received by you during our interview, making careful note of all details immediately after happening. Be cautious in doing this. Upon landing in France report to the Prefecture of Police, Bordeaux, and obey his instructions to the letter. Good luck.'

"I went home and put on my oldest clothes; an old blue serge suit, an olive drab shirt, a heavy pair of army shoes and a woolen cap. I had let my beard grow and I certainly looked rough.

"In passing through City Hall Park, New York, one sees many derelicts of the human race sitting on the benches. I sat down between two of these wrecks of humanity and

engaged them in conversation. I wanted to blend into their atmosphere. About ten minutes later a policeman came past and ordered the three of us to move on. I slouched away with the other two. Telling them that I was going out 'panhandling,' I took my leave, but not before one of them made an appealing and successful touch for a nickel. The method used by him in securing that nickel would have done credit to the greatest financiers in the country in putting through a deal involving millions.

"When I came to the Agency, there was a long line of bums, two and three deep, trying to ship as horsemen for France.

"It would be impossible to get a rougher and more unkempt gathering of men. It looked as if some huge giant had taken a fine comb and carefully combed the gutters of New York.

"I fell into this line and waited my turn. When I reached the desk, in front of me sat a little fat, greasy Jew. To describe his man-

ner of handling the men as being impolite would be a great exaggeration. The way he handled that line of human cattle would have done the Kaiser's heart good.

"It came my turn, and this conversation ensued:

" 'What do you know about horses?'

"I answered: 'Six years in the U. S. Cavalry.'

"The Agent: 'What Regiments?'

" 'Eleventh and Twelfth.'

" 'You 're a liar. You never saw the Cavalry.'

"I felt like punching him in the nose but did not do so. I wanted to ship as a horseman. I showed him my discharges. He said: 'They 're faked. What did you do, desert, or were you kicked out?'

"I was getting sore, and answered: 'Deserted the Twelfth; kicked out of the Eleventh.'

" 'What 's your name?'

" 'John Smith.'

" 'You 're a German.'

'This was too much for me, and I answered: 'You 're a damned liar.' I saw my chances of shipping vanishing in smoke.

"The Jew grinned and rubbed his hands, and said: 'You 're all right. Go into that room and get a card made out, and come back at two o'clock.'

"I received a card and went to a beanery across the street and had a wonderful meal of corned beef hash, muddy coffee and huge slices of bread, minus butter. This cost me fifteen cents.

"At two o'clock I reported back, and with seventy-two others, herded like cattle, in a long, straggling line, flanked by three of the employes of the Agency, we marched to the Ferry and landed 'somewhere in New Jersey.'

"The ship, a huge three-stacker, was lying alongside. We were put into single file, ready to go up the gangplank. Then our real examination took place. At the foot of the gangplank were a group of men around a long table. They certainly put us through a third degree to

find out if there was any German blood in us. Several men were turned down. I successfully passed the ordeal, was signed up for the voyage, and went aboard.

"At the head of the gangplank stood the toughest specimen of humanity I have ever seen. He looked like a huge gorilla, and had a big, crescent-shaped, livid scar running from his left ear under his chin up to his right eye. Every time he spoke the edges of the scar grew white. His nose was broken and he had huge, shaggy eyebrows. His hand was resting on the rail of the ship. It looked like a ham, and inwardly I figured out what would happen to me if that hamlike fist ever came in contact with the point of my jaw. As we passed him he showered us with a few complimentary remarks, such as 'Of all the lousy scum I have seen, this bunch of lubbers is the worst, and this is what they give me to take thirteen hundred horses over to Bordeaux.' Later on I found this individual was the chief foreman of the horse gang.

"We were ordered aft and sat on the hatch. The fellow on my right was a huge, blue-gummed negro. He was continually scratching himself. I unconsciously eased away from him and bumped into the fellow sitting on my left. After a good look at him I eased back again in the direction of the negro. I don't think that he had taken a bath since escaping from the cradle. Right then my uppermost thought was how I could duck this trip to France. The general conversation among the horse gang was: 'When do we eat?'

"We must have sat there about twenty minutes when the second foreman came aft. I took fifteen guesses at his nationality, and at last came to the conclusion that he was a cross between a Chinaman and a Mexican. He was thin, about six feet tall, and wore a huge sombrero. His skin was tanned the color of leather. Every time he smiled I had the impression that the next minute he would plant a stiletto in my back. His name was Pinero. His introduction to us was very brief: 'Get

up off of that —— —— hatch and line up against the rail.' We did as ordered. Then he commanded: 'All the niggers line up alongside of the port rail.' I guess a lot of them did not know what he meant by the 'port rail' because they looked very much bewildered. With an oath he snapped out: "You —— —— idiots! The port rail is that rail over there. Come on! Move or I 'll soon move you.' He looked well able to do this and the niggers quickly shuffled over to the place designated. He quickly divided us into squads of twelve men, then ordered: 'All of you who are deserters from the Army and who have seen service in the Cavalry, step to the front.' Four others besides myself stepped out. The first man he came to he informed: 'You 're a straw boss. Do you know what a straw boss is?' This man meekly answered, 'No, sir.' With another oath, the second foreman said: 'All right, you 're not a straw boss; fall back.' I got the cue immediately. My turn came next.

" 'Do you know what a straw boss is?'

"I said: 'Sure.'

"He said: 'All right, you 're a straw boss.'

"I had not the least idea of what he was talking about, but made up my mind that it would not take me long to find out. Then he passed down the line, picking out straw bosses. I asked one of the men in my gang what were the duties of a straw boss. He had been over with horses before, and told me that a straw boss meant being in charge of the gang to feed the horses and that he had to draw and keep careful check of the straw, hay, oats and bran. As I had served in the Cavalry, this job, as I figured, would be regular pie for me.

"In about an hour and a half's time Pinero had selected his straw bosses and divided the men into gangs, and assigned us to our quarters on the ship. These quarters were between decks and very much crowded, and the stench was awful. Iron bunks, three deep, with filthy and lousy mattresses on them, were set into the sides of the ship. The atmosphere in that dirty

hole turned my stomach and I was longing for the fresh air of the deck. A dirty bum, with tobacco juice running out of the corner of his mouth, turned to me and asked: 'Do the gray-backs bother you much, matey?' A shudder ran through me as I answered: 'Not much.' I figured out that as soon as I got them, as I knew in a very short time I should, they certainly would bother me, but I had to keep a stiff upper lip if I wanted to retain their respect and my authority as straw boss. Yes, 'gray-backs' are cooties.

"One fellow in my gang was a trouble-maker. He must have been about forty years old and looked as hard as nails. He was having an argument with a pasty-faced looking specimen of humanity, about twenty-six years old. To me this man appeared to be in the last stages of consumption. I told the old fellow to cut out his argument and leave the other fellow alone. Upon hearing this he squirted a well-directed stream of tobacco juice through his front teeth, which landed on my shoe. I in-

wardly admired and respected his accuracy. I saw my authority waning and knew that I would have to answer this insult quickly. I took two or three quick steps forward and swung on his jaw with my fist. His head went up against the iron bunk with a sickening sound and he crumpled up and fell on the deck, the blood pouring from a cut in his head. I felt sick and faint, thinking that he had been killed, but it would not do outwardly to show these signs of weakness on my part, so without even moving near him I ordered one of the men to look him over and see if he was all right. He soon came around. From that time on he was the most faithful man in the section and greatly respected me. The rest of the men growled and mumbled and I thought I was in for a terrible beating. Lying close at hand was an iron spike about 18 inches long. Grasping this, I turned to the rest, trying to be as tough as I possibly could:

" 'If any of the rest of you bums thinks he 's boss around here, start something, and I will

sink this into his head.' Although I was quailing underneath, still I got away with it, and from that time on I was boss of my section.

"Every man was smoking or chewing tobacco. Pretty soon the hold became thick with smoke, and I was gasping for breath, when the voice of the foreman came down the companionway:

" 'Turn out on deck and give a hand loading the horses. Look alive or I 'll come down there and rouse you out pretty —— —— quick.'

"We needed no second invitation and lined up on the deck. I looked over the rail. On the dock were hundreds of the sorriest looking specimens of horse-flesh I ever laid eyes on. These horses were in groups of ten or twelve, being held by horsemen from the New Jersey Stockyards. A lot of the men who had shipped as horsemen had never led a horse in their lives, and it was pitiful to see their fear.

"The foreman let out a volley of oaths for them to move quickly, and they decided to ac-

cept the lesser evil and take a chance with the horses.

"Then the work of loading commenced.

"I have been in a Cavalry Regiment when hurry-up orders were received to entrain for the Mexican Border and helped to load eleven hundred horses on trains. But the confusion on that dock was indescribable. The horses were loaded by three runways. My gang was detailed on the after one. The foreman was leaning over the rail, glaring down upon us and now and then giving instructions mixed with horrible oaths. He had a huge marlin spike in his hand. On the dock was the second foreman, in his large sombrero, a red handkerchief around his neck, wearing a blue shirt with the sleeves rolled up to the elbow, and carrying in his right hand a coiled lariat. It did one's heart good to see him rope the horses which broke loose. Watching his first performance, I knew I had been right in thinking he had Mexican blood in his veins.

"A bleary-eyed drunk was trying to lead a

horse by the halter up our run. He was looking back at the horse, at the same time tugging and jerking on the halter. You could see the white in the horse's eyes, and I knew right away, from my experience with horses, that this was a bad one, an "outlaw," as we would term him in the Cavalry. The drunk was cursing and swearing and kicking up at the horse's head. The foreman saw this and directed his barrage at the offender.

" 'How in h—— do you expect to lead a horse while you 're looking at him? Turn your back to him, you lousy bum. You are blocking the whole run. Turn your back to him, I say. You can't lead him thataway. If I come down there, I 'll soon show you how to get him aboard.'

"The bleary-eyed one became bewildered and in his excitement lost his footing on the slippery runway and fell underneath the horse, at the same time loosening his hold on the halter chain. The horse jerked his head loose, reared up, turned around and made a break for the

dock. The man on the gangway tried to scramble out of the way. The horse, in wheeling, let fly with both heels and caught him below the right ear with his near hind foot. With a piercing shriek the drunk clasped both hands to his head, fell over backward and rolled to the foot of the gangplank, where he lay in a crumpled heap, the blood pouring from his nose and mouth and the wound below his ear.

"Hearing this shriek, several of the men leading their horses, turned them loose in their fright, and there was a mad stampede on the dock.

"The pasty-faced horseman, whom I helped out a little while before in the argument, was standing near the runway, holding on to a horse. He turned his horse loose and rushed to the bloody mass, which was twitching with convulsive shudders. The foreman snapped out a long string of curses that almost froze my heart:

" 'What did I tell you? Did n't I tell you not to look at him? I knew you would get it,

and a damned good job, too; blocking that run with your fool tricks.'

"Then he noticed the pasty-faced horseman stooping over the victim and went on:

" 'Get 'im by the heels, you cross between a corpse and a mummy, and drag him out of the way. We bloody well got to get this ship loaded to catch the tide.'

"The pale-faced man kept on with his examination without paying any attention to the foreman's instructions. The foreman got blue in the face and bubbled over with rage.

" 'Did you hear what I tell you? Get 'im out of the way or I 'll go down there and pound some obedience into you. This ship 's got to be loaded.'

"The man still paid no attention. The foreman was speechless. In a few seconds the stooping man straightened up, and looking the foreman straight in the eye, calmly replied: 'He 's dead.' This did not seem to faze the foreman in the least and he bellowed out: 'How do you know he is dead?' The man an-

swered simply: 'I 'm a doctor.' Then the foreman once again exploded: 'A doctor! Blawst my deadlights, a doctor! Well, if you 're a doctor, what in h—— are you doing on a horse ship? You ought to be rolling pills for the highbrows.'

"The doctor never took his piercing look from the eye of the foreman. The foreman was now like an enraged bull. Spitting all over himself, he blustered out: 'Well, if he 's dead, there is no doctor that can do him any good. A couple o' you black skunks over there,' addressing two negroes who were almost blanched to a bluish white and who were trembling nearby, 'get a-hold of him and drag 'im out of the way.' One of the negroes, with a leering grin, replied: 'I shipped on this here ship to handle hosses, and I don't allow nohow that it 's my work to tote corpses around.'

"Just then the second foreman rushed over, gave the negro a push out of the way and, grabbing the heels of the dead man, pulled him away from the run. I turned away, sickened

with disgust. He then took an empty oat-sack and spread it over the bloody head.

"Just then the clanging bell of an ambulance was heard and a white-clothed doctor, followed by two men with a stretcher, pushed their way through the crowd of horses and horsemen. He was accompanied by a policeman. The body was put into the ambulance and taken away, while the police officer went on board the ship.

"The pasty-faced doctor was holding onto the rail of the runway and coughing. I thought each gasp would be his last. The second foreman was talking to him, but the doctor paid no attention. Then the second foreman coolly measured his distance and swung on the point of his jaw. The doctor crumpled up and fell on the dock. At this cowardly and dastardly act, I saw red and made a leap at the foreman. An onrushing light flashed in front of me and a huge locomotive, going sixty miles an hour, hit me between the eyes; then, blackness. When I came to, I was lying in

my bunk in the hold. I had an awful headache. Then everything came back to me with a flash. I could hear the gurgling of water against the ship's side and knew we were under way. Right then and there I decided never again, especially while aboard ship, to interfere with a foreman. Among that gang of human wrecks and cutthroats it was every man for himself, and the survival of the fittest. I had two beautiful black eyes, and my nose felt like a football.

"I went up on deck. The moon and stars were out and the twinkling lights of New York Harbor were gradually fading into the distance. Leaning over the rail were the chief foreman and the veterinarian, 'Doc' Casey, by name. I listened to their conversation. The chief foreman was talking:

" 'Load horses? Why, that bunch of scum that they wished on me could n't load lump sugar, one lump at a time. How Brown expects me to deliver 1300 horses into Bordeaux with this scurvy outfit, I don't know. We 're

lucky, I 'm thinkin', if 500 o' them don't die. Why, there 's not one o' the blighters knows which end of a horse eats hay. I tell you, Doc, your work is cut out for you. If, in a few days, you don't have a couple hundred cases of colic on your hands, then I 'm a bloomin' liar.'

" 'Doc' Casey answered:

" 'Well, I 'll tell you, Mr. Goorty, this is my third trip over and I have seen some tough bunches, but this one is the limit. I sure admit I have a job on my hands. It 's too bad that Pinero let out on that young fellow from the Cavalry, because, in my mind, that was a pretty cowardly blow. He seemed to know how to handle horses. What do you say if I give him the job of Assistant Veterinarian? He 's had six years' cavalry experience.'

"The foreman answered:

" 'Throw him over the side, if you want—I don't give a damn. But I guess you 'll need someone to help you out, so go to it.'

"I was overjoyed. Just then Pinero came aft. The horse doctor turned to him and said:

'Look here, Pinero, I 've seen lots of dirty work in my life, but that exhibition of yours on the dock is about the filthiest I 've seen in a long time. Now, just take a tip from me. That young fellow, Smith, out of the Cavalry, from now on is working for me, and you lay your hands off of him. If I find you meddling with him, I 'll push that silly grin of yours down your throat, until it chokes you. Now that 's all I got to say, lay off of him. Do you understand?'

"Pinero started to mumble excuses, but the Doctor shut him up with 'I don't want to hear any more. I 'm off o' you for life, but remember what I tell you. Steer clear from the two o' us, sabe?'

"I guess the second foreman sabied all right, because he vouchsafed no answer. My heart warmed to 'Doc' Casey and I slipped away unobserved.

"The next morning the Doctor fixed me up with court plaster and I was installed as Assistant Veterinarian at $30.00 for the trip.

I was to sleep in 'Doc' Casey's stateroom, where he had his medicine stock, but before entering the room 'Doc' said to me: 'Take this bucket of water; put a few drops of creosote in it, and go aft on the hatch and take a good bath, and throw your underwear away.'

"I asked him his reason. He answered: 'When you take your shirt off, take a good look at it and you 'll see why.'

I began to feel itchy all over but minutely followed his instructions.

"I took my shirt off. One look was enough. It was alive, and over the rail it went. 'Doc' loaned me a white suit and took charge of my outer clothing. What he did with them I don't know, but that afternoon he returned them to me. They were shrunk a size smaller, but they were clean.

"Five days out we ran into a squall and our work was cut out for us. We were greatly overloaded and had to put horses on the decks in wooden stalls. The ship was lurching and

pitching, and huge seas were belching over the gunwales

"Several of the wooden stalls gave way and the horses got loose on the deck. With every lurch of the ship horses went down, kicking and snorting, and slid over the inclined deck, hitting against winches and hatchways, scraping their hide off. It was worth a man's life to get into that mess.

"I had to respect the foreman and second foreman more or less then. Into the midst of that struggling and kicking bunch of horses they went, 'Doc' Casey with them. Four of the horses had broken legs, and Pinero, instead of shooting them, cut their throats with a sharp dagger which he carried.

"One of the negroes from the lower hold staggered to the upper deck, his face blanched almost white, his eyes popping from his head. Between gasps he informed us that a whole section of stalls, twenty-four in all, had been carried away between decks, and that the horses

were loose. He said three negroes of his gang were caught in this stampede.

"The foreman mustered most of the men, dividing them into three groups, in charge of himself, the second foreman and 'Doc' Casey. They went below. I followed.

"It was hell. The ship was pitching and lurching in a horrible manner. All I could see was a pile of kicking horses, smashed up planks, and the three negroes piled up in one corner. As the ship rolled they slid from side to side. There was nothing we could do. It was madness to attempt anything. The three negroes were dead, their bodies terribly mutilated from the hoofs of the horses.

"That night and the following day the ship rode the squall. Then it became calm and we all got busy. Of the twenty-four loose horses below, we had to shoot seventeen on account of injuries. Three others had died from broken necks. The four remaining horses were still alive but hardly had a square foot of hide left on them. I sure pitied them.

"The next day the three negroes were buried at sea without a word of prayer.

"About four days out of Bordeaux one of the large steam pipes in the lower hold burst. In this hold there were sixty-four horses. The engineer of the ship tried to repair the break, but it was almost worth a man's life to go down there in that hissing and scalding steam. The cries of the horses went straight to my heart. There they were, their bellies heaving, their nostrils red, inflamed, distended, gasping for breath, their feet spread apart and braced to keep them from falling. There would be a trembling of the legs, a few spasmodic attempts to retain their balance, as their bodies sank lower and lower, and this would be followed by a convulsive shiver as down they went with a crash to die on the deck. All we could do was to turn streams of cold salt water into the hold, thus trying to keep the heat down and save as many horses as possible.

"Why the engineer did not immediately shut off the steam, I don't know. I noted this fact

in my report. It was four hours before he did so; then the two foremen, 'Doc' Casey and myself, followed by twelve other men, went into the hold. I shall never forget the sight as long as I live. Nearly every one of the horses was dead, and those that were still breathing had to be shot. Some of them were practically boiled alive. The weather was hot and it was not long before the rotting bodies made the stench on board unbearable. We had to get those bodies out. Long tackles were rigged up, and a chain was put around the necks of the horses. I worked the winch. The bodies were snaked along the passageways in the hold and up to the hatch. Some of the bodies would not hang together, and it was a common sight to see a dead horse suspended in the air, either by his neck or hind leg, drop suddenly into the hold below, leaving his head or his leg hanging to the tackle.

"Every horse sent to France is branded with a different brand. They have a system of indexing them. As each dead horse was snaked

to the upper deck, 'Doc' had to stoop over and make a note of the brand before the horse was thrown overboard.

"As the dead horses were dropped over the side, a resounding splash was heard and the water was churned into a foamy white as the body momentarily sank from view. Then it would reappear and disappear in the wake of the ship, the sea gulls hovering and screaming above it.

"Just outside the entrance of the river leading to Bordeaux, a small, rakish boat, flying the tri-color of France, came alongside. We hove to and up the gangplank came three French officers. They were closeted for about twenty minutes with the Captain of the ship and our foreman. Then we continued on our course. In some places the banks of the river were only about twenty feet away. We could see the French women tilling their fields and as we went by these workers stopped and waved their hands in the air to us, and we waved back. It was my first sight of France, and I was

not in any way disappointed. It lived up to my expectations.

"A little farther up the river we came to a large dock where ships were loading and discharging cargoes, and a thrill passed through me as I saw my first batch of German prisoners at work. They were immense fellows, nearly every one being six feet or over, and they were guarded by little French soldiers, averaging about five feet five inches, with long rifles and fixed bayonets. As we passed, the German prisoners scowled at us, and we, feeling quite safe on the deck, yelled back insults at them. One big Irishman, right near me, took great glee in jumping up and down on the hatchway and running his finger across his throat. This seemed to enrage the prisoners and they yelled something in German. The Irishman must have understood it, for he let out a volley of curses in return. The French sentry seemed to enjoy this barrage of insults and did not in any way attempt to curtail the prisoners' remarks.

"Pretty soon the prisoners faded out of sight and we came alongside the dock at Bordeaux. I was all eagerness and strained my eyes so as not to miss the least thing. The dock was full of French Cavalrymen, hurrying to and fro. Huge Turcos, black as the ace of spades, with white turbans on their heads, were majestically striding about.

"After we warped into the dock and made fast, our work was over. We had nothing to do with the unloading of the horses. The French Cavalrymen came on board with a bunch of Cavalry halters hanging over their arms. It was a marvel to see with what ease and efficiency that ship was unloaded. The condition of the horses was pitiful. They could hardly bend their legs from stiffness. They hobbled down the gangplank and stood trembling on the dock, stretching out their necks and taking long breaths of the pure air. Then they started to whinny, calling backward and forward to each other. Even though I did not understand horse language, I knew ex-

actly what they were saying. They were thanking their horse God for their deliverance from that hell ship, and were looking forward to green pastures and a good roll in the dirt. Pretty soon you could see them bend their forelegs and lie down on the dock, and then try to roll over. Some of them did not have the strength for this and only feebly kicked. Pretty soon the whole dock was a mass of rolling horses, the Frenchmen jumping around, gesticulating and jabbering.

"After getting the horses up, the Frenchmen divided them into classes according to their height and weight. Then each horse was led into a ring chalked out on the dock and the army inspectors examined it. Very few were rejected. From this ring of chalk the horse was led into a portable stall and branded. You could hear the sing-song voice of the brander shouting out what sounded like 'Battry Loo.' As he yelled this, a French private came over, got the horse which had been branded, and led it away. An interpreter I

was talking to informed me that the average life of a horse in the French Army was three days. These poor beasts had only left that hell ship to go into the worse Hell of bursting shells and cracking bullets.

"I, after passing a rigid examination as to my nationality, and being issued a cattleman's passport, inquired my way to the Prefect of Police. I delivered to him the sealed envelope which I had received in New York. Upon opening it, he was very gracious to me and directed me into a rear room, where an interpreter put me through a grilling examination. From there I was taken to a hotel, and the next morning, in the company of a Sergeant and a Private, got into a little matchbox compartment on the funniest looking train I ever saw. The track seemed about three feet wide, and the wheels of the cars like huge cogwheels on an engine, minus the cogs. After bumping, stopping, and sometimes sliding backwards for twenty-six hours, we reached a little town. Supplies were piled up there as high as houses.

Officers and enlisted men were hurrying to and fro, and I could see long trains of supply wagons and artillery limbers always moving in the same direction, to the front.

" I was ushered into the presence of a French officer, who, I later found out, was a Brigadier-General of the Quartermaster Corps. I could hear a distant booming; they told me it was the guns of France, striving to hold back the German invaders. I trembled all over with excitement, and a feeling that I cannot describe rushed over me. I was listening to my first sound of the guns on the Western Front.

"Two days afterward I returned to Bordeaux, and shipped to New York on the French Liner *Rochambeau.* When I arrived in New York I reported to the Frenchman who had sent me over. He was very courteous and, as I reached out to shake hands with him, he placed both hands on my shoulders and kissed me on the right and left cheek. I was dumfounded and blushed all over. I think I could have borne another trip across with horses, but

that being kissed upon my return completely got my goat.

"I went back to the routine of my office, but everything had lost color and seemed monotonous. I believe I had left my heart in France, and I felt mean and small over there, eating three squares a day and sleeping on a soft bed, when the armies on the other side were making the world's history.

"Several times later I passed that sign on Greenwich Street, 'Horses for France, Men Wanted,' and the pictures of the second foreman dropping the pasty-faced doctor would loom before my eyes. I do not know to this day what became of that nervy wreck of humanity, who had the temerity to tell our foreman where he got off at.

"So, Sailor Bill, old scout, how about that for a 'passage,' " concluded Yank.

Sailor Bill did not answer.

Curly butted in: "Me for the trenches every time."

The rest agreed with Curly. So did Yank.

THE END